

PIERRE TEILHARD de CHARDIN:
A DIALOGUE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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Joseph C. Hoyle, Jr.
Dean

To my wife Dorothy
Beauty like hers is genius
Rossetti

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ABSTRACT

The writer makes the attempt to come to a basic understanding of Teilhardian thought from the perspective of the phenomenon of man and the phenomenon of Christianity. An attempt is made at reconciling cosmic love for the world and heavenly love for God.

The format that Teilhard adopts for this reconciliation is the similarity he discovers between convergent evolution and the Christian fact or religion. When one sees the world through Teilhardian eyes, there appears quite obviously the major hypothesis that the phenomena of reality have a tendency toward greater and greater complexity-consciousness.

Teilhard suggests that man is the highest term in the process and the intention of evolution is to heighten man's conscious awareness to the point of ultra-reflection in an individual sense of self awareness and in a collective sense of solidarity and purpose.

The place of Omega-Point in Teilhard occupies a very critical position. This is investigated quite thoroughly. Unification of mankind is the outcome of convergence which takes place at the apex of Omega. The characteristics of Omega are outlined, namely, irreversibility, unanimity, autonomy, personality and transcendence.

The conjectural or purely scientific Omega must be joined for its completion to the Christic-Omega of revelation. This subject is discussed at some length. One aspect of Omega-Christ that Teilhard brings forward quite forcefully is the way in which it is the answer to man's existential anxiety and estrangement. If one were to labor

under the awareness of a closed universe, this would remove the zest for life because the future would appear blocked. The Omega-Christ provides man with a hope, a destiny and therefore a future. Teilhard sees the implications of such a sense for the future as one of modern man's most pressing psychic needs. This issue is dealt with at some length.

Under the heading of Eucharistic Christ is seen the significant place this sacrament holds for Teilhard. When Christ was incarnated into history, a new line or genesis of life was introduced which is participated in via the Eucharist. The implications of the physical presence of God in Christ are worked out for the future of mankind. The fulfillment and consummation of history is seen in the continuity of God's involvement with humanity. This involvement will complete itself in the Parousia of the Omega-Christ and the Theosphere.

A brief discussion of Teilhard's views of human value, technology and eschatology are included at this point. Purity, love and self-denial are outlined next. Love is that cosmic force that will draw each unit of consciousness into the Center of universal love, the Omega-Christ, and thus into unity with one another.

Technology is a positive tool toward social maturity for Teilhard. The discussion is set over against Jacques Ellul's views regarding the dangers of technology.

Eschatology is the Divine milieu present to history in its fullest sense so that a transformation to maturity is realized by humanity. This is removed from utopian or golden-age ideals.

The final chapter is a brief critique of Teilhard. The writer feels there is confusion regarding the two Omegas. It is felt that the bridge between science and theology is not conclusively reached by Teilhard. The confusion of a starting-point is included next, ending with a comment on the weakness of Teilhard's organic model for wholeness.

The appendixes include the definitions of a number of important Teilhardian terms, several insightful personal prayers, and his biographical background.

A bibliography completes the work.

INTRODUCTION

One must come to understand and appreciate the depth of concerns and commitments out of which Pierre Teilhard de Chardin writes. Basically his aim was to achieve some reconciliation or synthesis between God and the world, and more specifically, Christianity and science. Teilhard had much more in mind than a purely abstract conceptualization of this relationship. Wildiers comments:

For him this was a genuinely existential question on which his whole being was implicated - as though his existence as a human being and a Christian were at stake. The solution that he proposed is consequently more the outcome of a personal encounter with life, of a subjective experience, than of a purely scientific enquiry.¹

It seems to be quite true that Teilhard never moved from this existential basis in his quest for truth. He said in an autobiographical reflection that his intention was:

to give an account of a psychological experience to which I have been directly subjected - one which I have personally undergone and which was just sufficiently reflective to become intelligible and communicable, without losing its objective value.²

The experience to which he refers appears to be the consistent theme permeating his life and writings, namely: "to Christify Matter therein lies the whole adventure of my inner life a great and magnificent adventure."³

A persistent tension in Teilhard's thought, which any evaluation

¹N. M. Wildiers, An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 26.

²Ibid., p. 27.

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³Ibid.

or analysis must take into account, seems to touch upon the question of his starting point. It is indeed true that he posits a "mystical a priori," to borrow Tillich's idiom, so that his attempt to "Christify Matter" suggests the vision of all things adhering together in Christ as a primary precondition to all further investigation. Teilhard's personal religious experience; that is, the adventure of his inner life, however, often gives way as a starting point to his attachment and commitment to the natural sciences. Thus Wildiers says:

To speak precisely, one may perhaps say that the paradox of Teilhard de Chardin consists in the fact that he makes the world of the natural science his starting point for the solution of a religious and theological problem.⁴

The question as to whether or not faith is a condition sine qua non for scientific investigation can only be raised at this point; and since the issue is an ever recurring one, it will be dealt with at greater length in other sections of the discussion.

The overall impression that Teilhard leaves with me is that of a soul's sincere "witness" to an encounter with religious and empirical experience and the consequent reactions, reconstructions and remodeling of both realms as a result. Indeed, there is a statement to this effect, when in La Christique the admission is made that his Christocosmic view of the world is the result of "bearing witness to a certain personal experience."

⁴Ibid., p. 30.

Teilhard's witness is not altogether fastened to the either/or of religious experience and natural science, but would lend itself to the possibility of a both/and relationship. It will become increasingly obvious that the hyphen in Christo-cosmic is both a separation and a union; an identity of agency and communion - that is of individual and communal interactions. Reconciliation and mutual nourishment for the mystical and the mundane as well as a "standpoint" from which to survey the two are the core matters in the pronouncement of his witness. "How we can reconcile, and provide mutual nourishment for, the love of God and the healthy love of the world," and "a reconciliation must be possible between cosmic love of the world and heavenly love of God between the culture of progress and the passion for the glory of God" express the concerns to which Teilhard bears witness.

As one reads Teilhard, there appears time and time again the single motif which cannot be overlooked or ignored; for it is the bedrock for his entire structure:

Somewhere there must be a standpoint from which Christ and the earth can be so situated in relation to one another that it is impossible for me to possess the one without embracing the other, to be in communion with the one without being absorbed into the other, to be absolutely Christian without being desperately human.⁵

The triumph of Teilhard's witness and vision for those who espouse similar aspirations is in his attempt at correlating the

⁵Ibid., p. 25.

Kingdoms of God and the world. The discovery which he sought to examine and use as the working hypothesis was "the marvelous and liberating harmony between a religion of the Christic type and an evolution of the convergent type."⁶ This harmonization process is the outline and development of Teilhard's philosophy of existence. The two sources of illumination, namely the cosmic culmination of a process of evolution of a convergent type and the Risen Christ become the nexus around which his thought moves forward toward balance and harmony.

One thing does appear certain to the reader, and that is the utter seriousness with which Teilhard took the material world and its development. Gabriel Marcel makes a point which could have reference certainly to Teilhard and others like him:

It is my deepest and most unshakable conviction, and if it is heretical, so much the worse for orthodoxy, that whatever all the thinkers and doctors have said, it is not God's will at all to be loved by us as against the creation but rather glorified by us through the creation and with the creation as our starting point. That is why I find so many religious works intolerable. A God who opposes himself to what he has created and is envious as it were of his own handiwork is in my eyes a false God and nothing more.⁷

The term "thought" rather than philosophy, theology, science or system would be more adequate a term to describe the general nature of Teilhard's writings. To my knowledge they were never systematized by him in any serious and deliberate fashion. His writings were more

⁶Ibid., p. 26.

⁷Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 135.

"as the spirit moved," often highly inspirational and personal, with little time out from his tremendously active schedule for concentrated and prolonged authorship. Wildiers writes:

We must not forget that their author was a man almost continually on the move, that he seldom had a library available, and did not even have at his elbow what he had written on previous occasions.⁸

Hence, the often-noted repetitions and abbreviated style of writing ought not lend itself to any serious criticism of the author. Teilhard affirms that his writings are not per se philosophically or theologically oriented or intended. "I am neither a philosopher, nor a theologian, but a student of the 'phenomenon,' a physicist (natural philosopher) in the old Greek sense," was the way he described his work in an interview on January 11, 1951. Naturally, the issues he deals with are basic to any world view and lend themselves to a suggested or possible framework of interpretation along several major disciplines.

While this presentation is not principally concerned with Teilhard as a "scientist," it must be noted that he was an investigator of the highest rank and regard in areas of geology and mammal palaeontology. His long list of technical writings, essays, articles and the like, amount to a bibliography of forty pages.

Granted the limitations inherent in his writings, which by the way are being published by Editions de Seuil in Paris and sponsored

⁸Wildiers, p. 45

by a committee of outstanding scholars, few men of our century have so positively influenced the course of human thought as has Teilhard.

One further word regarding the term "phenomenal." Teilhard does not use the term to denote what is currently referred to as "phenomenology;" that is, a study of the consciousness, the mind and the inner meaning of the psyche.

Teilhard means by "phenomenal" the study of the world including man as such, hopefully apart from the bias of any particular discipline whether philosophical, ethical or theological. This attempt at an in toto study of the world is within the realm of what Teilhard considers to be a phenomenology of the cosmic; that is, the universe viewed as an observable datum under the rubric of totality and intrinsic harmony.

Writes Wildiers:

Within the total spectrum of the natural sciences - or at any rate in close association with them - a place must be found for a science which is concerned with the totality of the cosmic phenomenon and seeks to probe right into its structure and inner dynamic as associated in this, of course, by everything that the other sciences have achieved in their several fields, but embracing and transcending all that, having regard to what is most specifically distinctive of the whole.⁹

Thus, Teilhard's study of the universe is an extrapolation of data from all branches of research leading to a view of the world seen exclusively from its wholeness and totality. What Teilhard's

⁹Ibid., p. 49.

hypothesis is, will become evident as the study progresses; but it must be stated clearly at the outset that this aim toward cosmic wholeness was clearly Teilhard's chief leitmotiv.

CHAPTER I

WHY PIERRE TEILHARD de CHARDIN?

Translator or Transformer

William Hordern suggests that two words have of late, been underscored by the church as sacred, the words "Dialogue" and "Relevance." It may be a humorous overstatement of the facts when he says, "...whenever Christians gather, they seem to get a masochistic glee out of analyzing how irrelevant they are to the world in which they find themselves."¹ Yet the statement clearly hits a sensitive nerve of the church.

In this required posture for dialogue and relevance Hordern suggests that there are two categories of theologians that he sees making the effort: those who are "transformers" and those who are "translators." The legitimacy of his selection as to the theological groups in either camp is not germane to the discussion. Hordern's point is that there is the possibility of being so zealous in the direction of dialogue and relevancy that one may indeed transform the Gospel into "another" Gospel, after Paul's warning to the Galatians. There may be too radical a revision of the content of the Gospel so that what results is only the world talking to itself. That is to say, the transformers have been so anxious to hear the

¹William Hordern, "Introduction" in New Directions in Theology Today (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), I, 138.

world that they have allowed the secularists to tell them what, as theologians, they must say. Hence, instead of dialogue, you have monologue; the world talking with itself and the transformers stunned to silence and to irrelevance; the very thing they sought initially to avoid.

The translators too seek for dialogue and relevance, to express Christianity in terms that speak to the contemporary situation but, and here is the major difference, they refuse to be told what to say. "Modern man cannot be the ultimate authority for what Christians may believe."² The translators see theology as relevant when it is able to tell the world something which the world is not already telling itself.

There is no need to press the point further, but in the last analysis, serious judgment must be given to this issue as to whether or not the theological perspective one chooses does justice to the Gospel and modern knowledge. This presentation suggests only the possibility of seeing Teilhard as a model and framework whereby Christianity may be translated for modern man. Our subject is not as high on the scale of the theological elite as say, Barth or Tillich; this he acknowledges. John Macquerrie's observation that Teilhard is at points philosophically weak does carry considerable weight. But Macquerrie goes on to say that we have none the less:

...an unusual combination, respect for science and
for the material creation together with a lively

²Ibid., p. 146.

sense of the Divine Presence. We can see that this particular contribution of Teilhard could be of great importance in the interpretation of the Christian faith in a secularized society.³

We move forward, then, leaving the "greater things than these" of Teilhard to up and coming philosophers and theologians, (the number of adherents is growing rapidly), while emphasizing the point that here we have a world and life view that translates Christianity in a manner that merits the attention of contemporary society.

Terrestrial Man

Teilhard best exhibits his consistent interest and underlying concern in a comment made in a letter to Canon Gundefroy, dated 1926:

I am thinking of a kind of 'Account of the Earth,' in which I speak not as a Frenchman, not as a unit in any group, but as a man. Simply as a 'terrestrial.' I want to express the confidence, desire, and plenitude, also the disappointments, worries and a kind of vertigo of a man who considers the destinies and interest of the earth (humanity) as a whole.⁴

It is possible for a religious person to have reality blocked from view by holding too tenaciously to conventional dogma. Science too has its weakness in so far as it becomes so engrossed with investigation of detail and materialism it often loses reality, and the fundamental questions of the world as a whole are left unanswered.

The quest for Teilhard is to assert the best of both worlds, to sail between the Scylla of dogmatism and the Charybdis of

³John Macquarrie, "God and Secularity" in New Directions In Theology Today, III, 96.

⁴Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Human Energy (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1969), p. 19.

materialism, holding to a view which confronts the world alone.

A quarter century ago the primary emphasis seemed to rest upon the discipline of "biblical theology," the scholarly study of the biblical hermeneutic. More recent scholarship in the field of theology has expanded beyond the specifically biblical rubric and has found relevance in issues and fields such as psychology, sociology, technology and science. This is not to suggest that biblical, historical, exegetical, rhetorical theology are not important. However, the equally important question pertains to the coherence of such scholarship within contemporary perspective. As one text dealing with contemporary theology rather emphatically explains:

Theology has to justify its very essence, now. The Gospel has to make sense, now. After all, the Church cannot live on its past history; it is supposed to have a Gospel to proclaim and to proclaim it now. What is that Gospel in twentieth-century terms? What are its elements and what are its demands? What is Christianity for us today?⁵

When theology welcomes the input of the various other categories of knowledge there is bound to be some rather drastic reshaping of theological assumptions and methods. Theology is no longer "queen" of the sciences but must posture itself in a proper humility both to be informed and to inform contemporary society as to the nature and goals of any and all meaningful experience.

⁵John Bowden and James Richmond, A Reader In Contemporary Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 12.

It is here that Teilhard's thought has so much to offer. He thinks of himself as a scientist. Empiricistic and naturalistic presuppositions are accepted and adequately dealt with. He has only admiration and respect for the scientific mentality and methodology. The more discursive elements of his thought are informed or rooted in nature so as to have a wholistic or unitary view of experience. His starting point is the "taste of the earth." In other words, Teilhard provides an answer to the questions raised above as to how the Gospel may be understood in twentieth-century terms.

There are at least five perspectives from which we may read or regard Teilhard: evolutionary science, poetry and mysticism, natural theology, Christian theology and finally the perspective of process philosophy somewhat in the vein of Bergson and Whitehead.⁶ These various strings on the Teilhardian harp sound forth at certain points more pronounced than at others. Yet the fact remains that nowhere does he allow these to be distinct but interrelated, thus offering the best harmony and understanding of the whole realm of matter, man and God.

His method shows itself to be basically inductive; that is, scientific validation is the standard from which extrapolation becomes possible even in the areas of religious belief. Teilhard abhorred the term "metaphysical" because such a term suggested deductive reasoning from assumed a priori abstractions. Teilhard's

⁶Ian Barbour, "Five Ways of Reading Teilhard" in The Teilhard Review III (1968), pp. 3-20.

view of religion was that of a great thinker who was aware that he lived in an age of science. That is to say, his theology is to be distinguished from views that are basically prescientific in their origins and methodology. This penchant for a scientific basis to experience brought against him the label of deviationist and heretic which greatly clouded the reception and effectiveness of his works. Pius XII's encyclical, Humani Generis was aimed against his evolutionary views and as recent as 1962 the Holy Office issued a Monitum (warning) against him.

Martin E. Marty says in the forward to Hefner's work on Teilhard that here is:

...a distinctive focus on the late priest by locating him as the newest-fangled representative of an old-fashioned category, that of a Christian humanist. It is apparent that, for Hefner, Christians have no place to go if they do not come to terms with scientific-humanist striving of our day, and that Christian theology must find a new center in the possibilities offered by evolutionary and developmental process.⁷

Marty but acknowledges the intention of Teilhard himself whose avowed aim and purpose for his life and philosophy was the hope of stimulating the simultaneous rebirth of humanism and Christianity.

Here is pressed into two loci the reasons why Teilhard, in this writer's opinion, is a figure of pronounced importance for our times, although unacknowledged in his own: (1) He suggests a framework in which the primary content of the Christian message is not sacrificed

⁷Martin E. Marty, "Forward" in Philip Hefner's The Promise of Teilhard (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970).

and discarded. (2) His methodology is appreciative of the postulates of modern science within the larger vision of a Christian humanism.

In the succeeding pages Teilhard is allowed to speak for himself, with as little interpretation on the writer's part as possible. The Teilhardian material is so copious that the time allowed for this research had to dictate the proverbial scratching of the surface only. However, if it is possible in presenting Teilhard's vision as one suggestive of a Christian concern for bridging the Divine and the human; that is, one who maintained a vital dialogue between science and theology then this presentation will have achieved its purpose. As de Jong poignantly remarked, "He loved the world but did not want to give up God."⁸

⁸Pieter de Jong, "Teilhard's Vision of Hope" in Conflicting Images of Man (New York: Seabury Press, 1966), p. 109.

CHAPTER II

OUTLINE OF TEILHARDIAN PHENOMENOLOGY

AND EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT

PHENOMENOLOGY

By way of clarification, the reader will be presented with Teilhard's own summary of his Phenomenology. Regarding this summary he wrote in a letter to Mlle Jeanne Mortier, dated January 19, 1954, "...for I believe it's the briefest and clearest statement of my position that I've written."¹ Being a late document, written a year before his death, it thus provides an excellent overview to Teilhardian thought.

Developing as a countercurrent that cuts across Entropy, there is a cosmic drift of matter towards states of arrangement of progressively greater complexity (this being towards - or within - a "third infinite," the infinite of complexity, which is just as real as the Infinitesimal or the Immense). And consciousness presents itself to our experience as the effect or the specific property of this Complexity taken to extremely high values.

If this law of recurrence (I call it the law of 'complexity-consciousness') is applied to the history of the World, we see the emergence of an ascending series of critical points and outstanding

¹Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Let Me Explain (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 71-74.

developments, which are the following:

1. Critical Point of Vitalization

Somewhere, at the level of the proteins, an initial emergence of consciousness is produced within the pre-living (at least so far as our experience goes). And, by virtue of the accompanying mechanism of 'reproduction,' the rise of complexity on earth increases its pace phyletically (the genesis of species or speciation).

Starting from this stage (and in the case of the higher living beings) it becomes possible to 'measure' the advance of organic complexification by the progress of cerebration. That device enables us to distinguish, within the biosphere, a specially favoured axis of complexity-consciousness: that of the Primates.

2. Critical Point of Reflection (Or Hominization)

As a result of some 'hominizing' cerebral mutation, which appears among the Anthropoids towards the end of the Tertiary period, psychic reflection - not simply knowing, but knowing that one knows - bursts upon the world and opens up an entirely new domain for Evolution. With man (apparently no more than a new zoological 'family') it is in fact a second species of life that begins (the noosphere).

3. Development of Co-reflection (And Rise of an Ultra-Human)

If it is applied to the great phenomenon of human socialization,

the criterion of complexity-consciousness provides some decisive evidence. On the one hand, an irresistible and irreversible technico-cultural organization, noospheric in dimension, is manifestly in progress of development within human society. On the other hand, as an effect of co-reflection, the human mind is continually rising up collectively - collectively, because of the links forged by technology, to the appreciation of new dimensions. An example is the evolutionary organicity and corpuscular structure of the Universe. Here the coupling of organization and interiorization can again be very clearly distinguished. This means that all around us the fundamental process of Cosmogenesis is continuing just as before (or even with renewed vigour).

Considered as a zoological whole, mankind is presenting the unique spectacle of a phylum that is organico-psychically synthesizing upon itself. It is, indeed, a 'corpusculization' and a 'centration' (or centering) upon itself of the noosphere as a whole.

4. Probability of a Critical Point of Ultra-reflection Ahead of us

If it is extrapolated into the future, mankind's technico-socio-mental convergence upon itself forces us to envisage a climax of co-reflection, at some finite distance in time ahead of us: for this we can find no better (indeed, no other) definition than a critical point of Ultra-reflection. We cannot, of course, either imagine or describe such a phenomenon, which would seem to imply an escape from Space and Time. Nevertheless, there are certain precise conditions

in the field of energy that must be satisfied by the event we anticipate (a more pronounced awakening in man, as it comes closer, of the 'zest for evolution' and the 'will to live'); and from these we are forced to conclude that Ultra-reflection coincides with a final attainment of irreversibility. This must be so, since the prospect of a total death would be so disheartening as to stop the further development of hominization.

It is to this higher term of Co-reflection (which means in fact, of unanimation) that I have given the name of 'Omega-Point'; the cosmic, personalizing, centre of unification and union.

5. The Likelihood of a Reaction (Or 'Reflection') of Omega on The Human in The Course of Co-reflection (Revelation and the Christian Phenomenon)

The more we consider the indispensability of an Omega to maintain and animate the continued progress of hominized Evolution, the more clearly can we see two things.

The first is that a purely conjectural Omega - one that was arrived at simply by 'calculation' - would be powerless to keep active in man's heart a passion strong enough to make him continue the process of hominization to the very end.

The second is that if Omega does really exist, it is difficult not to accept that its supreme 'Ego' in some way makes itself felt as such by all the imperfect Egos (that is to say all the reflective elements) of the Universe.

From this point of view the ancient and traditional idea of 'Revelation' reappears and again finds a place in Cosmogogenesis - entering it, this time, through biology and the energetics of evolution.

From this point of view, again, the Christian mystical current takes on an extraordinary significance and actuality: and this because, while it is true that, by the logic of energetics, the heart of some intense faith is absolutely indispensable to the completion of the process of complexity-consciousness, at the same time it is equally true (how true, you have only to look around the world to realize) that at the present moment no faith can be distinguished that is capable of fully taking over (by 'amorizing' it) a convergent Cosmogogenesis, except faith in a Christ, a Christ of the Pleroma and Parousia, in quo omnia constant, in whom all things find their consistence.

EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT

An important suffix for Teilhard is "genesis," as in "cosmogogenesis," "anthropogenesis" and "Christogenesis." By this he means that the world, man and Christ are in a state of becoming, changing, developing, as contrasted with static reality. The universe is in the state or process of realization.

The process of the world is marked by three stages: Matter, life and spirit, or the geosphere, biosphere and noosphere respectively. The geosphere is that original crust of the earth

composed of inorganic matter. However, for Teilhard, matter is not an object with an outside only to be acted upon, but has an inside and in some way is a subject as well. While tangential energy appears as the dominant force in matter, there is the action of radial energy present; that is, the presence and power of Spirit to a rather reduced degree. The geosphere is the preliminary ring of the earth, and far from being dead, passive and inert, was preparing for another threshold or layer. Teilhard describes this transformation in these words:

Then at a given moment, after a sufficient lapse of time, those same waters here and there must unquestionably have begun writhing with minute creatures, and from that initial proliferation stemmed the amazing profusion of organic matter whose matter complexity come to form the last (or rather the last but one) of the envelopes of our planet: the biosphere.²

The biosphere comes into existence with the phenomenon of the living cell, developing on to include the world of plants and animal life.

Life is born of matter, yet is quite original and new. Teilhard supposes that a definite law is at work in the process of unfolding life; namely, the law of increasing complexity and self-conscious awareness - the next threshold is latent in the elements of this biosphere. Complexity of nervous systems among animals is the factor which helps the leap or emergence of yet another level

²Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 78.

or era of life, that of man. "After thousands of years rising below the horizon, a flame bursts forth at a strictly localized point. Thought is born."³

With the birth of self-reflective consciousness the earth is covered by another layer, the noosphere. Here the process of development takes on a new dimension, namely, that of self-determination. Man knows freedom and responsibility. So with this added significance to the noosphere, spirit now offers possibilities for fulfillment latent in the previous two stages. However, the process called by Teilhard, spiritualization, continues. Man is not a finished product, but the changes will be more spiritual; that is, increasing complexity-consciousness, personalization and interiority, rather than exterior and material.

It is at this level that Teilhard speaks of hominization of matter. He means, quite literally, that the stuff of the world which has assumed different form and assumed various stages of development in the formation of the earth, has attained a new stage that we call man, or humanified matter. What does the system look like that has evolved into a single, unified, self-conscious system of life?

Like a brain of brains, a superorgan, a cybernetic system, in which computers and machines and telecommunications all play a role, as extensions of man's biological organisms. One can hardly resist the guess that Marshall McLuhan has drunk deeply at Teilhard's fountain of vision, that what McLuhan has described is the history of development within Teilhard's noosphere.⁴

³Ibid., p. 160.

⁴Philip Hefner, The Promise of Teilhard (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970), p. 47.

The category of complexification with its twofold emphasis of multiplicity and centeredness, is the link that binds all the spheres of reality together. Life is defined as "vitalized matter," as matter in a higher form of complexity, and consciousness is matter in an extraordinary state of complexity.

Spirit is thus not set in antithesis to matter but is rather within the material continuum, at a very much advanced stage of complexification. Centeredness makes for identity both in individuals and groups, differentiation among individuals and a sense of solidarity within groups. Centeredness refers to the personal focus that results from the concentration of awareness upon the distinctive meaning that an individual's life possesses and the singleminded expenditure of energy to actualize that meaning in deed and style of life. Centeredness is what gives a person identity and is never to be seen as isolation or individualism. Centeredness allows for personalization; that is, the unique and incommunicable identity that every individual consciousness possesses by virtue of the centeredness upon itself which takes place in community and interrelatedness with all other persons.⁵

One can detect that the "enhancement of the 'centric' qualities" of life will generate a level of socialization, unification or planetization. Such collectivization is moved not by the hitherto external forces evidenced in totalitarian and communistic regimes of current experience but by the power that is from "within" which Teilhard sees as "sympathy," or "love" which will synthesize the personal and the collective.

Teilhard presses for the unification of mankind into one organism based on his studies in paleontology which conceives of man

⁵Ibid., p. 40.

as "one" species having a unique "phyletic sense" that demands its own evolutionary development into the collectivistic and unitary sphere. Unification is entity or species self-awareness; this is the progress that Teilhard visualizes under the rubric of planetization.

War is an evidence not of the disruption of progress toward unification, but a necessary stage in its direction, for such are the upheavals resultant from the trauma that breaks through the rigidity of ethnic and national hatreds and isolations.

Every new war, embarked upon by the nations for the purpose of detaching themselves from one another, merely results in their being bound together in a more inextricable knot. The more we seek to thrust each other away, the more do we interpenetrate.⁶

World War II brought the Pacific region from the fringe of civilization into the orbit of industrialized nations which again Teilhard sees as a step in the direction of unification. Unification of mankind is the human manifestation of "convergence" which takes place within the noosphere and the ultimate stage or arising of convergence will be that which actualizes itself at the Omega-Point. Teilhard's statement in form of an aphorism in this regard is "everything that rises must converge." This so intrigued Flannery O'Connor that she adopted it as a title for one of her novels.

⁶Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 132.

Technological progress, communications media, the "global village" context of the universe which makes economic, intellectual, cultural and political contacts necessary, as well as the U. N. and UNESCO in which Teilhard was active, all pointed for him in the direction of unification.

One can see, therefore, that if there were to be singled out a major emphasis in Teilhardian thought, it would well be in the range of the noosphere's demands for synthesis and unity of experience.

CHAPTER III

PHILIP HEFNER'S

"A TEILHARDIAN PERSPECTIVE"

One of the most lucid presentations of Teilhardian thought is that offered by Philip Hefner in his book titled: The Promise of Teilhard, published in 1970. This was followed by a brief article published in 1972 on Teilhard's views as they pertain to the future. This writer found this concise treatment very helpful and thought it would be beneficial to include parts of three sections in this presentation, namely his comments on "The Starting Point," "Six Basic Statements About the Future" and "The Two Faiths."¹

THE STARTING POINT

The characteristic mark of a Teilhardian viewpoint is rooted in the fact that it takes its origins from a lifetime of focusing on the geological and paleontological history of planet earth. This viewpoint grows out of an attempt to establish a unified science of the world, positing that "The world of life, taken as a whole, forms a single system bound to the surface of the earth,"² and that this single system is bound by physical-chemical links to the history of

¹Philip Hefner, "The Future as Our Future: A Teilhardian Perspective" in Hope and the Future of Man (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), pp. 15 ff.

²Claude Cuénot, Teilhard de Chardin (Baltimore: Helicon, 1965), p. 228.

the planet. Reality seeks fulfillment of this thrust toward complexity-consciousness; the real with which we have concourse, both within ourselves and without, has a destiny. The future is the fulfillment of that destiny.

Any attempt to uncover the meaning of the world and man, as well as the course which action should follow, without reference to their destiny is abortive. At the same time, the future as such has no final and independent autonomy over against what has been and is. "Future" and "destiny" lose their intelligibility except as they are conceived to be present to us in the mode of the future of what we have been and of what we are. We may personalize this conviction by saying that it makes no sense to ask the meaning of past-present (world and man), to ask after our own meaning, apart from reference to our future destiny, while it makes no sense to speak about the future except as it is intelligible to us as our future.

As a consequence, we can speak of a dialectical relationship between future and past-present. To sum up, it is impossible to understand the future except relative to a deep probing of the past-present of which it is the future. It is impossible to understand the past-present (which is the present identity of man and the world) except relative to the future which reveals what it is destined to become. Human life is no epiphenomenon, as the approach from matter and from interstellar evolution would postulate, but rather it is the latest and most characteristic term of universal physical-chemical processes. Man represents, individually and socially, the most

synthesized state under which the stuff of the universe is available to us. Correlatively, he is at present the most mobile point of the stuff in course of transformation.

For these two reasons, to decipher man is essentially to try to find out how the world was made and how it ought to go on making itself.

SIX BASIC STATEMENTS ABOUT THE FUTURE

1. The Future is One of Convergence and Unification

Unification in quantitative terms builds up the pressure that provides the circumstances under which qualitative changes can occur; the changes that are authentically new. Increased unification of a more densely planetized human species does not simply augur "more of the same," more density, closer communications, etc., rather it builds up pressures which are the seedbed of the Novum.

Teilhard used the term "individualism" to discredit the suggestion that the problems of massed humanity as a planetary species could be avoided through a willful or romantic escape into individual autonomy, just as he rejected the idea that the trend toward collectivization could be turned back. Sometime in the first half of the twentieth century, the human species became a planetary entity and crossed irreversibly over the line where it attained a species consciousness. This consciousness is not yet full-orbed. In fact it has not even taken firm shape on most fronts, but it is in

existence, and it cannot be eradicated so long as there is a viable human species.

This postulate of convergence or unification means that the Teilhardian perspective is intrinsically oriented toward the political dimension of human existence, as well as toward the management of technology - in addition to its well-known concern for spirituality and personal development. Furthermore, the postulate of unity rests on the conviction that ultimately our concern for the future must deal with the whole, the totality. The concept of the future is totalizing, not fragmenting.

2. The Future is One of Progressive Personalization

A Teilhardian perspective brings with it a view of creation and the creative process which is hinted at in the phrases: "union creates," "union differentiates," "union personalizes." The evolution of energy states is toward a unification of centered entities which do not thereby lose or abandon their individual value, but rather, enter into the unity with their personal value intact and thereby enhance it through union. The differentiating and personalizing dimensions are implicit in the Teilhardian concept of union, and it is for this reason that creation can be considered unitive and union creative.

Individual value is not to be abandoned or given up into absorption into some greater value - hence Teilhard's own judgment of the inadequacy of Eastern mysticism, as he understood that

mysticism. The future cannot be conceived in terms of impersonality, as if to say that the ultimate is a brute force or energy, or a dissipation in terms of Newtonian entropy under the Newtonian interpretation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. At this point, Teilhard saw himself diverging from the existentialist, Marxist and Newtonian worldviews. As judged by the criterion of the coherence of truth, these other positions had to be rejected as inadequate or false, and in terms of our topic, inadequate analogies for the future; because they posit a future that is less than the vital center of what man is now. Hence, they cannot be futures of fulfillment and they would cut the nerve of man's desire to carry out action that will fulfill the trend of evolution. In each of these opposing positions, the challenge arises for us to deal with death. Absorption into the ALL, stoic resignation in the face of the brute impersonality of the force of energy, participation in the impersonal on-going dialectic of the material, or simply dissipation and dispersion, providing fertilizer for the eons ahead, these are all ways of saying that death finally destroys what is most precious to us: our personhood.

Personalization does not mean that man projects upon the cosmos a great person in his own image, resonating with himself, as an attempt to avoid death's verdict. The future, therefore, will be an intensification of our personhood, and not a dispersion of it. Peace is neither "millenary felicity" nor "bourgeois tranquillity." It is the tense cohesion of centered entities who have not been

unfaithful to their own identity. This dialectical tension dare not be relaxed. It is the dialectical tension which heats up the mass so that the new can come into existence - the new which fulfills all the centered selves.

3. The Future is Open, Not Closed

The future must be truly future, which means new and not susceptible to domestication. A Teilhardian perspective calls attention to the open-ended character of evolution; man and the cosmos are still evolving, and this entails qualitatively new developments. The openness of the future is a postulate for man's feeling and thinking himself "at home" in his world, inasmuch as he holds to the unlimited actability and activating character of the world.

4. The Future Implies the Worth and Reliability of Creation

A Teilhardian perspective rests on the conviction that the universe (and this includes our world, our species, ourselves) is thinkable, livable and viable, to be consummated, because it is of absolute worth. The question of evil and defect is very real because the unitive-personalizing process; that is, creation moves through unavoidable pain, misjudgment, willfulness. Man can destroy the process. But if he does, then the strange circularity and paradoxicality in which we must think leads us to say that the entire edifice of thought and belief which we hold will have proven wrong, and that it will be clear in a twinkling that either God is

not or that our understanding of Him has been monumentally false. This is to say that our conviction of the reliability and absolute worth of creation is an inexorable postulate both of our reason and of our faith, worked out in fear and trembling, and the two, faith and reason, stand or fall together.

The corollary to this is that the world matters to God. It is not dispensable to him. His transcendence, however that is to be conceived, does not allow that the creation can be demeaned or ultimately allowed to be destroyed. The world is in God, and this implies that every personal identity or value is irreversible and eternal.

5. The Future Activates Human Energy

The transformation from activation of pre- and non-human energy a retro to activation of human energy from ahead is a transition of significant proportion; one which Teilhard called the transition from the "old" to the "new" evolution. Not only because it shifts, so to speak, the motor of evolution from the rear to the front, but also because that shift is correlated to self-conscious reflection which must be brought to bear critically in order to discern and make value judgments about the image of the future that is most real and true.

6. Love is the Action Which Fulfills the Destiny

Love is the term which covers the action in which activated

human energy contributes toward the fulfillment of the evolutionary process which at the present time focuses in man. Several distinctions need to be made in order to give more precise content to the concept of love. First, love is defined as the action of union between centered persons which is freely entered into. This distinguishes it from coerced action, from union which is tangential, drawn from peripheral concerns and not a center-to-center union. Second, there is great emphasis placed upon the centering effects of true love. Love gives centeredness or identity to the various actions a person enters into. It gives center to a person's entire life. It gives center or identity to a group of persons acting together and thus, theoretically, to all of humanity. Love totalizes at these different levels, by pulling together and centering. Third, love is engaged, under all its forms, in world-building - in building up the stuff of our world and our fellow human being in it - not just on an individual basis, but in ways appropriate to a species that is now planetary in scope and whose challenge is to contribute to the fulfillment of the world. Fourth, this love is by definition earthly and material. World-building is contribution to the physical development of persons and the world. Love is mercy, politics, psychotherapy, as well as the organization of the energies of the human race.

THE TWO FAITHS

Teilhard himself spoke of two kinds of communities concerned with the process of life: those which discerned that destiny is

calling man forward, toward the Ahead (Science) and those which discerned that man's life is lived out of an ultimacy, calling man upward toward the Above (Religion).

The religious communities must recognize that the ultimate reality they know and worship, God, is the God Ahead, not the God Above. Thus, they may gain a true insight into God and His will for their own lives and at the same time provide correction and depth for the communities of the Ahead. If the Above is symbolized by the vertical force and the Ahead by the horizontal, then the God Ahead is symbolized by the line of force which is their resultant, proceeding from the point of their intersection at a 45 degree angle. God, thus, is the "Prime Mover Ahead," and "Mover, Collector, Consolidator, the God-Forward of evolution."

The Christian symbols are the concrete vehicles for understanding the meaning of the process of which we are a part, the direction in which it is going, the shape of our actions. Christ is the Omega toward which the process is tending - ultimate unification of all things, with the most intense personalization of the individual value and identity - and Omega; which is both presence and eschaton, both source and goal, both context and direction. Christ reveals to us that the process is in God, and that his transcendence lies in his being the future of our past-present, rather than in his being distant from our material realm.

CONCLUSION

There are implications which arise from the assertion that the question of the future is fundamentally the question of activating the human energy available, together with the energy of man's natural support system, so as to advance evolution toward its fulfillment. As vague as this may seem, it is precise enough to lay before us the challenge of organizing and mobilizing human energy, so as to accomplish the unification of the human mass within its global environment. At the same time intensifying the personal centeredness and identity of every individual and group within the planetized mass, recognizing that this mobilizing of energy toward these ends is simultaneously the pathway toward ultimacy: God. The genuinely political and the genuinely religious are brought together. Homo politicus must be at the same time homo religiosus, at least for a Teilhardian. The political task, if it is properly conceived, is an encounter with the numinous. The numinous encounter is indissolubly linked to the enterprises of the technical assessment and political organization of physical and spiritual energy, as well as to the whole range of ethical reflection.

When the Teilhardian perspective is viewed in this manner, it is risk and wager as much as it is optimism. Our talk about the future is the obverse side of our confidence that man does have a destiny and our hope that he can realize that destiny. A Teilhardian recognizes that destiny is God's future in Jesus Christ; but he also believes that the traces of God's will and action up to now in the

evolutionary process which God created, indicate that God has so incarnated himself and his future into the dynamics of the self-conscious zone of his creation that the future of the cosmos and of God rests upon man - man can kill himself, his world, and God. That is why the activation of man's energy is the crucial question of the future; because if that energy is not activated in the proper direction, we will be only moments away from the abyss; and whether our belief has been right or wrong all these centuries, we will in any case be without men or God.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH

Man and the Birth of the Spirit

Man is to be placed, that is to say, be returned to nature. "We shall never understand either man or nature unless, as the facts demand, we completely replace man (without destroying him) in nature."¹ It has been traditional to place man outside of nature, as superior or different to the world, as indicated often by man's responsibility to govern, control and classify nature. Man, however, was made from the "dust of the earth"; that is, he has an affinity and growth pattern similar to all of nature. Teilhard says in an important footnote in this matter:

God's creative action is no longer conceived as an intrusive thrusting of his works into the midst of pre-existent beings, but as a bringing to birth, of the successive stages of His work in the heart of things. It is no less essential, no less universal, no less intimate either on that account.²

Man is a phenomenon; that is, born out of nature, as "the thinker" and as such reveals one of the most basic aspects of the universe, namely spirituality. We must make "...a special place in the physics of the universe for the powers of consciousness, spontaneity and improbability represented by life."³

¹Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Human Energy (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1969), p. 20.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 21.

Life now becomes the definition of matter, without the two being separated as so often is the case. These are not two faces of nature, fighting and opposing one another.

Teilhard rejects the "deterministic" view of matter as a starting point and for an understanding of the world. This road leads nowhere, for this view of matter cannot explain the present condition of man as a self-conscious, spiritual being. Matter viewed as "Spiritual Stuff" has the freedom and elasticity to lend itself to evolution and life. The universe as cosmos is not viewed from the starting point of unconscious elements of matter out of which life as an accident burst forth, but it is "fundamentally and primarily living."

Man is the point of emergence in nature at which point this underlying life and consciousness expresses itself. Henceforth, man is the source of "fermentation" for the universe. Man is the key of things and the final harmony in whom everything is shaped and explained. Nature is to be approached from the side of consciousness and freedom, considered by Teilhard as primordial. The basic evolutionally type or presupposition is therefore the "evolution of greater consciousness" by which living beings arise themselves toward greater organization and spontaneity. This can alone give us the direction and true shape of the movements of life.

The value of the present moment or any egocentric system is criticized by Teilhard who thinks that there is no lack of systems that speciously exalt the unique value of the present moment

(understood as an absolute, closed on itself). This is but a first impulse and natural for man to become intoxicated with his grandure. But, he cautions, if one is honest with himself, he will have to recognize that in reality his own "person" is insufficient for him; and that the most valuable part of his being is precisely what he is still expecting from the unrealized part of the universe. Man's hope is in the future of humanity, and so to absolutize or individualize value is to fragment and not to unite humanity, and takes one further from hominization and the spirit of the earth itself.

The real "sense of the earth" breaks up the plurality or fragmentation caused by the values taken to be inherent in family, class, culture or nation; for this is a childish "sense of the earth." Man has passed this "crisis of puberty" and has come to see that hominization, that is, living in association under the spirit of the earth, is the only real and human unity or value possible.

The Passions of the Spirit of the Earth

Are there passions or senses of common destiny that draws the thinking fraction of life ever forward? Yes, Teilhard suggests three: love, unity and research.

Love. Here is the most "... universal, the most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces."⁴ Love is a drawing

⁴Ibid., p. 32.

or attraction on centers of consciousness by the "center of the universe in course of taking shape." One may opt to investigate the evolution of the earth from without by the external aspects of atomic, molecular or cellular combinations. But Teilhard suggests we see the evolution of the spirit of the earth from within; that is, "to trace the evolution of love."

From man onwards, the cosmos is constructed on moral magnitudes. Therefore, one is not surrounded by two separate realms, one physical and one moral, but by one: the "physico-moral." The one underlying energy which actualizes this physico-moral aspect of the universe is love. "The physical structure of the universe is love."⁵ Society must always remain personal, given to hominization; otherwise it is liable to fall into the impersonal or become a machine. But this is a false threat for Teilhard since the successive growths step by step culminates in someone.

In its most primitive form, love could hardly be distinguished from molecular forces. Love evolved little by little, until it reached hominized love, which is no longer a love for purpose of material fertilization but a "union of the mind, spirit, person."

Human unity. A sense of the earth also generates in man, besides love, the irresistible urge and pressure toward solidarity.

⁵Ibid., p. 72.

By revealing to each one that a part of himself exists in all the rest, the sense of the earth is now bringing into sight a new principle of universal affection among the masses of mankind: the devoted linking of one element for another within a single world in progress.⁶

This is the striving and passion for the "miracle of the common soul." Without this warmth of companionship and deep affinity, mankind will only suffer and vegetate in its isolation. Teilhard feels that genuine love is the force leading to affective convergence of centers of being and this leads to love resulting in mutual linkage and union.

Scientific research. Is the world condemned, as it grows, to automatic death by stifling beneath its own excessive weight? No, says Teilhard. It is in course of gathering to itself a new and higher body. Man will, he believes, act in an attitude of "conspiration"; that is, will raise the edifice of life to a bigger and better structure. "The age of nations has passed. Now, unless we wish to perish we must shake off our old prejudices and build the earth."⁷ This is a principle that operates within the structure of the Spirit of the earth, indeed, is the ultimate reaches of love and scientific research itself. Life has a biological future only on the basis of its developing the active consciousness of unity.

The day of national fatherlands is over. One section of the world cannot grow without expanding by its growth the rest of the earth; only by this will the universe be considered the true fatherland of all humanity.

⁶Ibid., p. 35.

⁷Ibid., p. 37.

Ultimately, since the state of being presupposes the act of personal death and rebirth, that is, the earth can only become conscious of itself through the crisis of conversion.

The Future of the Spirit

Granted the full realization of hominization and maximum maturity of existence, will there be a future stage or can the Spirit of the earth be lost, dissipated, disintegrated in the future?

Teilhard says:

No. Consequently, however unstable life may appear, however impressive its connection with limiting space and forces of disintegration, one thing above all is certain (because it is as certain as the world). Spirit will always succeed, as it has done till now, in defying risks and determinism. It is the indestructible part of the universe.⁸

It is the fact of hominization that has given rise and progress to the idea of God.

Having reached a higher stage in self-mastery, the spirit of the earth is discovering a more and more vital need to worship: from universal evolution God emerges in our minds greater and more necessary than ever.⁹

Life reflecting on itself requires a solution to the "problem of action." What justifies this reflective quality of life best is a divine goal, an absolute, a peak from which life will never descend again.

Constitutionally, after all, the personalization of the universe can only operate by preserving forever in one supreme person the separate sum of 'persons' born successively in the course of its evolution. God can only be defined as the centre of centres.¹⁰

⁸Ibid., p. 41

⁹Ibid., p. 43

¹⁰Ibid., p. 68

This means man is no longer open to "disaggregation," that is, a return to dust or nothingness. In the center of centers, persons are once and for all consolidated; meaning human "incorruptability" which has been the quest of all philosophy, has found its rightful place as the spiritual principle unifying experience. "The personal elements of the universe would return to disorder (that is to say, to nothingness) if they did not meet some super-personality already actualized, to dominate them."¹¹

We are now in a stronger position to move on to a specific aspect of Teilhard's evolutionary development itself, namely the Omega-Point.

This vision of Teilhard's evolutionary development is not without its critics. Many colleagues, Teilhard says, look at the macrocosm and emphasize its immensity and the consequent insignificance of this planet, but there is the other end of the telescope which cannot be overlooked.

Following the physicists and astronomers we have thus far been contemplating the universe in terms of the Immense-immensity of space, time, energy and number. But is it not possible that we have been looking through the wrong end of the telescope, or seeing things in the wrong light?¹²

Teilhard's development looks to and through the end of the telescope which shows us complexity, hominization, consciousness,

¹¹Ibid., p. 71

¹²Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Future of Man (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 109.

collectivity and planetization. That is, the presence and condition of man who is doing the seeing and investigating. This, of course, is the genius of another great French philosopher, Pascal. His insistence too was that man's glory is not in his substance, so insignificant compared to the Alps, but in the greater fact that he is "thinking substance." The thought patterns of Pascal and Teilhard touch at two major points: an appreciation for nature and experimentation, but as meaningful only within the circumference of Divine intention. Just one passage from Emile Cailliet's very excellent work on Pascal to help make the point:

Man 'is made only for infinity.' Progress is the law of his spirit, and 'the entire procession of mankind, down the course of so many centuries, may be thought of as a single man, who always lives on, and who is always learning.' The ancients represent our childhood. Let us not allow ourselves to be bound by the boundaries of their thoughts, but, rather supported by their achievements, let us give free scope to the experimental method in the study of nature. Beyond this, however, there enters our thinking the grace of a revelation whose authority cannot be denied, and should not be doubted.

Now, a self-taught man like Pascal, having defined the experimental method of studying matter and its manifestations, was on the way to discovering that God alone must be 'the ultimate end, as He alone is the true principle.'¹³

While man is currently the highest point on the curve of moleculization, could he stand as an occurrence for a new threshold of life, some new and higher synthesis? The law of recurrence, that is,

¹³Emile Cailliet, Pascal, The Emergence of Genius (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 71.

Teilhard's leap of sight, his scientific observation, leads him to posit a third phase; the first being the formation of the cell, the second was the individual cellular complexes up to and including man. This third phase is the formation of an organic, social, super-complex due to the existence of personalized centers of consciousness. This phase leads to the planetization of mankind.

... born on this planet and spread over its entire surface, coming gradually to form around its earthly matrix a single, major organic unity, enclosed upon itself; a single hyper-complex, hyper-centered, hyper-conscious arch-molecule, co-extensive with the heavenly body on which it was born.¹⁴

Teilhard is insistent, therefore, that evolution has not reached its apotheosis in the present separate centers of personalization. Rather, there is yet a level to be raised, a growth experience yet to be realized, the planetization of life.

It is this idea which can and must bring us the spiritual fire without which all material fires, so laboriously lighted, will presently die down on the surface of the thinking earth, the fire inspiring us with the joy of action and the love of life.¹⁵

The process is one of the world of man being irresistibly forced to form one single whole. The world is "converging" upon itself, called by Teilhard "pan-human convergence." This process of totalization in his opinion cannot be brought to a halt despite the "abnormal" extension of liberty or refusal by a few individuals.

¹⁴Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man, p. 120.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 122.

Our biological self-unification lies, because of the enormous quality of unarranged humanity, very far above us in consciousness, yet not so far in time as we may suppose. The final emergence is the Omega-Point, the Theosphere, which will lead us into our next aspect in our treatment of Teilhard.

CHAPTER V

THE FINAL EMERGENCE: OMEGA-CHRIST

INTRODUCTION AND PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

Granted the noosphere is a growing sector of complexity-consciousness toward planetization, Teilhard suggests that something further is needed to give this convergence direction, purpose and completion. Such is the function of the Omega-Point. This is the critical point of maturity, whereby man not only individually but collectively, will have reached along the complexity - axis, the extreme limit of the world. Here, Teilhard feels, is a weltanschauung common to the consciousness of all mankind.

Several things are descriptive of this Omega apex: (1) Irreversibility, (2) Unanimity, (3) Autonomy, (4) Personality and (5) Transcendence.

By irreversibility, Teilhard suggests that the force of the movement which has beckoned us forward will not be halted or turned back in the future. It may take millions of years, but the promise of the "peak" must be ever before us since "man will never consent to labor like a Sisyphus."¹

By unanimity is envisioned a common spirit, brought about not be external social, material forces but by a direct, center to

¹Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Vision of the Past (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 231.

center internal attraction. Just as the construction of molecules takes place on the basis of atomic affinity, so human elements are attracted through sympathy and on to new synthesis. This synthesis will super-personalize man; that is, bring him under the influence of an ever-tightening planetary embrace to a sense of universal solidarity based on their profound community, evolutionary in its nature and purpose. The nightmares of brutalization and mechanization which are conjured up to terrify us and prevent our advance are at once dispelled.

By autonomy and personality, Teilhard means that the Omega-Point is "... that irreversible center of personal stuff totalizing in itself the essence of our personalities."² As such it is a center-point which gathers in itself the entire consciousness that is reflected at every and all points in the circumference of the circle; thus the Point here is the ALL in which all centers of human personalization are realized individually, but also collectively. The Omega-Point then functions as a "personal - universal center at the summit of evolution."³ To the challenge of diffusion and loss of "I" and individual centers of personalization in the personal - universal center, Teilhard has the following answer:

Union differentiates. In virtue of this fundamental principle, elementary personality can, and can only affirm themselves by acceding to a psychic unity or higher soul.⁴

²Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Human Energy (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1969), p. 142.

³Ibid., p. 143.

⁴Ibid., p. 144.

The reverse of this would be to ask in what sense or state of being the Omega-Point as personal - universal center of realization of life can admit to this fusion of itself with the personal centers of humanity. The one condition which Teilhard stresses as significant is that the higher center to which they come to join without mingling together has its own autonomous reality. Since there is no fusion or dissolution of the elementary personalities, the center in which they join must necessarily be distinct from them; that is to say, have its own personality.

Regarding transcendence he says:

While being the last term of the evolutionary series, Omega is also outside all series. Not only does it crown, it also closes. If by its very nature it did not escape from the time and space which gathers it together, it would not be Omega.⁵

Thus, the Omega must be in one of its aspects outside of time and space, acting as the center or heart of evolution so that it draws or attracts the whole of the process into the likeness of itself. Omega is the horizon for the center of convergence. It becomes plain then that "The Great Stability" requires a deeper nucleus than what is provided by the process itself. It presupposes, besides autonomy and personality, a transcendent and divine center as well.

The emergence of conscious reflection and its capacity for personal communion and communication suggests to Teilhard the possibility, but more strongly the high probability, that the Omega would

⁵Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 270.

reveal itself to this present level of conscious awareness. It would seem inevitable that its existence should be manifested to us here and now through some traces. Upon the thinking entity we have become by hominization, it is now possible for it to radiate from the one center to all centers - personally. We must look for this hidden message of the personal Omega in the complex flood of evolutionary forces that run through us. Religious experience is the place where the Omega shows itself real to the noosphere. Says Teilhard:

Religion is not a strictly individual crisis or choice or intuition - but represents the long disclosure of God's being through the collective experience of the whole of humanity. God bent over the now intelligent mirror of Earth to impress on it the first marks of his Beauty.⁶

The most expressive form of religious experience for Teilhard is Christianity, or as he calls it the "Christian Phenomenon." It would seem that just as a new threshold of experience emerged with the phenomenon of man, that is, in reflective self-awareness, in Christianity a new threshold of religious experience emerged in so far as it gives historical focus upon the center of all Being in the person of Christ. Historically, starting with the man Jesus Christ, a phylum or line of religious thought appeared within the human mass, and its presence has continually influenced more and more widely and deeply the development of the noosphere.

The full development of the noosphere, then, depends to a great degree upon the recognition of "the seed of supervitalization"

⁶Teilhard de Chardin, Human Energy, p. 47.

planted in the noosphere by the historical appearance of Christ Jesus. The implications of growth via the proliferation of the seed is the animation and the assembling in their highest form all the spiritual energies of the noosphere. As stated before, it is to Christ that one is to look toward for the completion and fulfillment of humanization and personalization. "In position and function, Christ, here and now, fills for us the place of Omega-Point."⁷

Some of the characteristics of Christ as Incarnate and Risen Humanity are envisioned by Teilhard to be:

1. He is physically and literally, "he who fills all things"; at no instant in the world, is there any element of the world that has moved, that shall ever move outside the directing flood he pours into them, Space and duration are filled by him.

2. He, physically and literally, is the one who consummates; that is, whose final synthesis results in the impression of his "supreme consciousness" upon total, supremely organized, complexity. And since he, Christ, is the organic principle of the harmonizing process, the whole universe is ipso facto stamped with his character, shaped according to his direction and animated by his form.

3. In him, again physically and literally, since all the structural lives of the world converge upon him, and are knitted together in him; it is he who gives its consistence to the entire edifice of matter and Spirit.

⁷N. M. Wildiers, An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 135.

Teilhard sees here a new concept of God-in-Christ, of panentheism, or a religious renaissance which has not lifted itself to a high degree of self-consciousness but would be yet at a rather incipient, almost nascent stage of growth, even after almost two millenia. The threshold or transformation within the noosphere has taken place; that is, the body of Christ has been introduced into existence; now the process of "ALL in ALL" unfolds itself. Christ is truly worshipped when he is viewed within the context and purview "as the God of progress and evolution."⁸ Christ-Omega: the Christ, therefore, who animates and gathers up all the biological and Spiritual energies developed by the universe. Finally, then, Christ, the Evolver.

TEILHARD'S ANSWER TO EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY

Teilhard feels that the Biblical Christ appears as essentially invested with the power to give the world, in him, its definitive form. He has been consecrated for a cosmic function. Christ's high priestly prayer of John 17:22, "that they should all be one, as we are one," is significant for Teilhard in so far as he understands the text to suggest unity as mankind's final end. The theology of Paul, likewise, expresses a profound tendency toward totality, one-body concepts so that distinctions between ethnic groups, aristocratic and social status is diminished and the unity of all men in Christ is emphasized.

⁸ Teilhard de Chardin, Human Energy, p. 91.

Therefore, Paul in Colossians says: "in him all things subsist," Omnia in ipso constant. If the world is an evolution, the Christ who is also the Beginning, the Bond, the Term of all creation, must now offer himself for our adoption; not as the Logos of Alexander, but as the "Evolutive" Christ. Teilhard is quite anxious to follow the Apostolic and Pauline tradition of the Cosmic-Christ in and through his new discovery or determination of Christ as the "Evolver"; that is, the center toward which all things move.

Teilhard is trying to broaden the "natures" of Jesus beyond the traditional God - Man. Thus, he has suggested that there be something akin to a third nature, that of the world, or cosmic nature. Those who take Teilhard literally have found cause for heresy, but following Tillich's suggestion of the "symbolic" quality of the person of Jesus as the eternal God - Man, we can suggest that Teilhard is merely trying to broaden the horizon in scope of involvement of the world and Christ. Again he compared the Cosmic-Christ to an "aurora," which has been labelled a rather thoughtless expression, having given "insufficient thought (here as elsewhere) to the precision of his language and to the respect due to accepted formulas, which are something equally necessary."⁹ Granted the legitimacy of this complaint, Teilhard's intention was to remove the notion that Christ's influence was only limited to the planet "earth." The Christic problem of the early church fathers was in regard to the

⁹Henri de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1965), p. 41.

nature of Jesus in relationship to God which was ultimately formulated in terms of the Trinity. In our time, thinks Teilhard, the vital question has become the following: to analyze and specify exactly, in its relations the existence of the influence that holds together Christ and the universe.

The place of man in a universe that is centered in Christ becomes a consistent theme in Teilhard's investigation. Man in a shrinking world must adjust forces of technology, economic and social systems to the end of mature organization and unanimity. Such a tightening of external or social forces will have an additional pressure upon the mental; that is, a curvature which is not only mechanical but of a reflective psychic environment as well. Teilhard thinks that mankind is via these two irresistible factors; that is, the two curvatures, one of globe (physical) and the other mental (psychic), destined to move forward the heightened individual and collective self-actualization. Such advanced degrees of socialization will cause and create the condition for an ever increasing interior "oneness"; a unanimity of all men.

Does this process go on ad infinitum? No, since Teilhard envisions the whole process of socialization moving toward a centering of mankind upon itself; that is, the centration of the noosphere as a whole upon itself. Such a "paroxysm of co-reflection" is an actual finite point in the future of Teilhard's evolutionary physics. He calls it a point of "ultra-reflection."

It would appear as though this were the focus or terminus for the process of convergence itself. The hypothesis presupposes that at this point mankind will have reached a maximum of unity, and since for Teilhard union differentiates of personal, individual self-actualization, he calls this dimension of convergent socialization, Omega-Point. Here is the limit of the socialization process and ipso facto of evolution itself.

Will Omega-Point be reached? What guarantee does mankind have that such a level or point of solidarity and self-actualization will be a reality in the future of evolution? There are dangers of failure both exterior and interior. The exterior threat follows the negligible possibilities of a nuclear catastrophe, or lack of food and materials. The internal threat is the loss of the "tendency to survive" by not being able to foresee a future consonant with his being and nature, thus losing what is most essential to arrive at Omega, "the taste for life." Is there a guarantee that there will be this innate quality of evolution and process capable of constantly wetting man's appetite for the taste of life? Or does the sense of being trapped in a no-exit universe, in a one way existence toward annihilation, this "sickness of a dead end" degenerate the human will to the point of futility and despair which is the death before death?

This question of the will to believe is the heart of the matter for the future of mankind. Teilhard says:

The evolutionary vigor of mankind can wither away although it be surrounded by mountains of coal, oceans of petroleum and limitless stocks of wheat; it can do

so as surely as in a desert of ice, if man should lose his impulse, or worse develop a distaste for ever increased growth in complexity and consciousness.¹⁰

What Teilhard is insisting upon is the view that Omega must exist now, seen as a self-subsistent center, and as such must be a guarantee of irreversibility. Primarily, Omega must provide for man a "way out," so that in embracing Omega, one will move into a quality of life that has future promise and potential.

All hope for attraction between men resides or is:

... linked at its root with the radiations of some ultimate Center (at once transcendent and immanent) of psychic congregation; the same Center as that whose existence, opening for human endeavor a door to the Irreversible, seems indispensable (the supreme condition of the future!), for the preservation of the will to advance, in defiance of the shadow of death, upon an evolutionary path becomes reflective, conscious of the future...¹¹

The Omega-Point then is Teilhard's primary evolutionary-ontological presupposition - or hypothesis.

The circularity of Omega is seen in the idea of Omega becoming an actuality in order for the necessary events inherent in evolutionary process to be realized, that is, the socialization of humanity at the Point of complexity-consciousness. Teilhard insists that evolution depends upon Omega, not Omega upon evolution. As Faricy observes:

¹⁰Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 205.

¹¹Ibid., p. 245.

It may seem that his argument for Omega is a circular argument and in a way it is. He makes an existing Omega-Point a part of his hypothesis of evolution because it makes the hypothesis more coherent, because the hypothesis makes more sense that way. His real argument for existence of Omega is if life has meaning, Omega has to exist.¹²

For Teilhard, Omega is either/or, so much so that the condition of freedom and destiny for both organic and inorganic structures of reality depend upon one's acceptance of its existence. He says:

Either nature is closed to our demands for futurity... or else an opening exists - that of the super-soul above our souls. In the last analysis the best guarantee that a thing should happen is that it appears to us as vitally necessary. We have said that life by its very structure, having once been lifted to its stage of thought, cannot go on at all without requiring to ascend even higher.¹³

Teilhard's analysis of contemporary anxiety sees as its root cause what he calls "the sickness of the dead end - the anguish of feeling shut in." What makes man "modern" is his consciousness, his conceptual patterns of existence, these patterns being related specifically to the overarching concept of "evolution" and the consequence feeling as to the outcome of this process. Anxiety is caused for Teilhard by modern man's question of futurity; the possibility of a reversal in evolution, that is, devolution and diminution of physical/psychic energy to the point of abysmal or

¹²Robert Faricy, Teilhard de Chardin's Theology of The Christian in The World (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), p. 71.

¹³Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, pp. 233-234.

total annihilation. Man is anxious to know whether or not there is an outcome - a suitable outcome - to that evolution.

The meaninglessness of existence and experience, the threat of the valuelessness of all values, seems to be the basis from which Teilhard moves. In other words, to stand over against a "hermeneutically and hermetically sealed" universe, that is, one in which no answer and no Spirit can be given to the ambiguities of experience, is his primary motivation for the development of the evolutionary hypothesis, including Omega. Teilhard is not unlike Tillich at this point since both feel that existential man can raise the question of the meaning of existence which occasions the response of the revelation of Jesus as the Christ. Both seem to agree as to the procedure for their apologetics; namely, to start with the existing ontological issues arising from modern man's quest for identity and value and move from these to the essentialization of existence by the answers provided to existence via theological constructs primarily rooted in Jesus the Christ (Tillich) or The Cosmic-Christ (Teilhard).

One commentator says:

For Teilhard, modern man's most pressing psychic need is his assurance that some successful outcome exists for that progress on earth for which he knows himself responsible. Unless such a guarantee is given, that is to say, unless the prospect of a total death is eliminated, then there is serious danger that progress will flounder and the whole human enterprise come to a halt.¹⁴

¹⁴Christopher Mooney, Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 67.

What does Teilhard's phenomenology of evolution posit as an indication that this universe has meaning? The scientific formulation of complexity-consciousness is his suggestion. This means basically that the dynamic movement of the universe is in the direction of ever increasing structures of complex material relationship and subsequently even higher levels of consciousness. The process of evolution from the elemental level of conscious arousing, to present contemporary sophisticated technical levels of socialization, is meaningful within what Teilhard calls the idea of "convergence." This gives certain definitions or parameters to the process by including those ultimate or maximum reference points or levels to which the process of complexity-consciousness is in movement. Of course, this again raises the hypothesis for Teilhard of the Omega - which is the convergence of complexity-consciousness in its total actualization.

Out of convergence grows the need for irreversibility and transcendence; the guarantee that evolution will be finally focused in its complexity-consciousness by an actualization while inherent in the process is none the less "ahead" of it, to which all movement converges.

This "scientific" hypothesis of convergent evolution cannot stand isolated from theological presuppositions if it is to have the power of persuasion toward meaningfulness for modern man. The scientific for Teilhard needs the balance of the theological since only in this way can there be a satisfactory answer as to the

identity of the point of convergence of complexity-consciousness. Teilhard sees no possibility of a convergence of evolution upon itself; rather something further is required to give meaning to evolution, and this is the theological reflection substantiated by revelation and the tradition of the church that the Omega be identified with the Risen Christ. Teilhard justifies this move by saying that the Christian fact cannot be ignored but must be positioned in the development of the earth. In other words, Teilhard desires to show that if God is the fecundity and focus of evolution, that is, its richness which allows for the universe to be pregnant with possibilities, then is it not to be expected that somewhere Omega would reveal itself? Says Teilhard:

If, on the other hand, Omega is, as we have admitted already in existence and guarantee at the very core of the thinking mass, then it would seem inevitable that its existence should be manifested to us here and now through some traces.¹⁵

Teilhard looks to the religions of the world - his criteria are coherence and fecundity; that is, meaningfulness and enrichment of human motivation. The oriental religions, Teilhard feels, do not generate the requisite attitude of action or participation in the process of the world. Rather they discourage it. Communism and other religions of materialism or naturalism being without a theological counterpart, are not activating in the long run since they leave "no way out." They remain hollow, closed, inflicted with

¹⁵Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man, p. 291.

the sickness of the dead end, and as such discourage human endeavor.

Teilhard states that the:

... faith which finally triumphs must be the one which shows itself to be more capable than any other of inspiring man to action. And it is here, irrespective of all philosophical and theological considerations, that Christianity decisively takes the lead with its extraordinary power of immortalizing and personalizing in Christ to the extent of making it lovable; the space-time totality of Evolution.¹⁶

What causes the individual to move from reason to affirmation of faith in the revelation of Omega-God? Does Teilhard's apology take into account the interaction and interrelation between reason and revelation so that the former may comprehend or inform the latter? No, for Teilhard as for Tillich, man must stand under the judgment of grace, must be grasped by the Divine Presence. One has to move from the act of knowing to that of recognition, which is the state of "ecstasy" in Tillich, while Teilhard calls it the "emergence, under the influence of grace, of theological faith." Such theological faith is "grace" in so far as man qua man is passive receiver of this revelation and only in a position to reflect upon the events which God has revealed to human history in the person of the Incarnate and Risen Christ.

Teilhard insists that:

It is under the illuminative influence of grace that our mind recognizes in the unitive character of the Christian phenomenon, a manifestation (reflection)

¹⁶Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man, p. 217.

of Omega on human consciousness, and it identifies the Omega of Reason with the Universal Christ of revelation.¹⁷

Again it is the gift of grace that enables the correlation to have meaning between the Christ and Omega.

Teilhard has taken us, as Faricy says, to an identification which is the:

... keystone of Teilhard's whole vision of reality. The Omega of his generalized physics of evolution and the Christ of Christian revelation are one and the same; it is this that, for him, gives meaning to the universe and a direction to human effort.¹⁸

This is to say that for Teilhard the universe as bare and naked physics would suggest or requires the positing of some direction toward an Omega, the Christian revelation on the other hand posits a universal Omega in the person of Jesus the Christ. Can, asks Teilhard, the world sustain two ultimates or must there be an overlapping, correlation, coherence and identification between the two? The answer is the union within his principle of the Omega-Christ. The universal Christic center and the universal cosmic center, that is, Christian revelatory faith and scientific phenomenology, are not divergent and antithetical centers but are of a piece within the coherence and scheme of God's revelation in Christ. Christian revelation confesses that Christ is the savior of the world. This means that the world is not open to actualization from an external

¹⁷Faricy, p. 9.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 92.

source outside of Christ. For those "in Christ," there is the guarantee of evolution that moves beyond the "things that are seen" to a realization of humanization which are the future things not seen but believed in on the basis of the present power of God within creation.

Teilhard is quite unequivocal at this point:

For a Christian, provided his Christology accepts the fact that the collective consummation of earthly mankind is not as meaningless and still less a hostile event, but a precondition (necessary, but not sufficient in itself) of the final 'parousaic' establishment of the Kingdom of God - for such a Christian the eventual biological success of Man on Earth is not merely a probability but a certainty, since Christ (and in him virtually the world) is already risen. But this certainty, born as it is of a 'supernatural' act of faith, is of its nature supra-phenomenal.¹⁹

The supra-phenomenal quality of such Christian faith is again a reference to Teilhard's conviction that only the Christian consciousness is so endowed as a "gift of grace" from God and not a inference drawn from empirical science.

The answer then to the existential question of purpose, meaning and value in a universe that appears to be "closed," is its convergence on Christ. Teilhard's oft repeated assertion is, "In a world certainly open at its summit in Christ Jesus we no longer risk dying of suffocation." The "mystic vision of Omega" has been criticized as unscientific because it is outside the field of verification. However, Teilhard as Tillich, is not disturbed at

¹⁹Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man, p. 246.

this criticism since both agree that the field of the "mystic," or to use Tillich's term, "ecstatic" Omega transcends logic. Teilhard reminds us that in reference to the total implications of Omega, man "... can have no inkling and to which he can lay no claim by virtue of his 'nature' alone."²⁰

THE EUCHARISTIC CHRIST

The symbol to which Teilhard directs the attention of his interpreter for a further understanding of Omega-Christ is the Eucharist. The life of the individual and that of society as a whole can be in process of actualization only as the participation in the communion of Christ becomes real in their experience. Hence, all spiritual life as well as all social interrelatedness is joined to "the" sacrament which acknowledges the presence, actual and abiding, of Omega-Christ in the evolutionary progress of the world. Holy Communion is an acknowledgement of the Incarnation which reveals Omega-God in terms of Omega-Christ, offering a physical presence of God in the world because of its abiding quality. This is analogous to what Tillich refers to as "Spiritual Presence," and which Teilhard considers is the source for the creative process or unfolding of Christo-genesis. This communion is the believer's guarantee that the promise of God, "Behold I make all things new" is in process

²⁰Faricy, p. 95.

of becoming, and that "in Christ" one participates in the qualities of this "new life" which shall be revealed at the Last Day.

Faricy comments on the unitive function of the Eucharist by saying:

... all the Communion in history form, in their organic unity, one vast Communion. For the Eucharist considered in its total function, is really the manifestation of the unifying divine energy applied in detail to each spiritual unit in the universe. When he goes to Communion the Christian touches the very heart of evolution; because to receive the Eucharistic Christ is to be incorporated - a little more each time - into the process of Christogenesis.²¹

The cosmic theology of the Eucharist for Teilhard is therefore both personal and universal in the sense of organically binding all humanity to itself in the observance. The Eucharist is viewed as an extension of the universe. "This is my Body" is taken in a cosmic and universal sense, to indicate that the world of human agency and material activity is consecrated in Christ.

The "mystique" of the Omega is not unrelated to that of the Eucharist. Indeed, in the mystery of the Eucharist, Teilhard finds most often the subject for his meditative prayers. Typical of such prayers would be the following: "Since Lord I your priest have today neither bread nor wine nor altar, I will extend my hands over the totality of the universe and take its immensity as the material for my sacrifice. Is not the infinite circle of things the final Host that you want to transform?" This prayer written at the front lines during World War I is not unlike Tillich's World War I experiences,

²¹Ibid., p. 136.

which in both instances drew these two men of spiritual stature into a more determined commitment from idealism to a realism which takes this physical world into serious concern.

It may be significant to close this section with a quotation from a literary figure who, while somewhat removed from the theological greatness of Teilhard, still shares this view of redeemed reality. Flannery O'Connor closes one of her short stories, "The Temple of The Holy Ghost" with these words:

The sun was a huge red ball like an elevated Host drenched in blood and when it sank out of sight, it left a line in the sky like a red clay road hanging over the trees.²²

CONCLUSION

Teilhard can only posit an Omega-Point on the basis of the Incarnation. That is, the fulfillment or consummation of history is seen in the continuity given to it by the involvement of God himself - the enfleshment of the Christ. Without this presence or investment of Divine energy into the main stream of life, there would be little basis for a Teilhardian view of human fulfillment.

One day, the Gospel tells us, the tension gradually accumulating between humanity and God will touch the limits prescribed by the possibilities of the world. And then will come the end. Then the presence of Christ, which has been silently accruing in things, will suddenly be revealed like a flash from pole to pole.²³

²²Flannery O'Connor, Three (New York: New American Library, 1955), p. 194.

²³Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 133.

Teilhard's vision has been called one of hope. We realize that this hope and future is based on a faith that God finally will draw all men together into one and become ALL in ALL. Over against the despair of our age he has presented a vision in which starting with the phenomena as empirically given, he tries to show how these phenomena point beyond themselves, toward God in the future. His vision, therefore, is not an argument or proof for the existence of God. It is, rather, an effort to make us see that faith in God does not force us to give up faith in man or in the world.

One final statement, dated September 1937, which will point up Teilhard de Chardin's vision of Christian humanism and the hope he held for the world:

At two critical points human energy has already assumed the form in which we know it today. First the appearance of life, whence emerged the biosphere; then the emergence of thought which produced the noosphere. Cannot a further and final metamorphosis have been in progress since the birth of love in Christianity; the coming to consciousness of an 'Omega' in the heart of the noosphere - the circles' motion towards their common center; the appearance of the theosphere? A dream and a fantasy, it will be said. But it fits singularly well with the march of things. And is it not a strange coincidence moreover that taken in the cold strictness of its Catholic claims, Christianity (and this explains its struggles to keep jealously free of sects, races, nations and empires) has never claimed to be anything less or anything else but this?²⁴

²⁴Teilhard de Chardin, Human Energy, p. 160.

CHAPTER VI

HUMAN VALUES, TECHNOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGY

HUMAN VALUES

The subject matter for discussion under the heading of Human Values is aimed at answering the question as to the role and responsibility of the individual to society. Teilhard's attitude is very precise at this point: Christianity endows the person with the "courage to act." This courage to act is in keeping with Teilhard's Christian assumption and commitment that in Christ the human tasks to which we dedicate ourselves are for the purpose of transforming the world into the divine milieu.

The courage to act finds particular meaning and fulfillment in a "religion of conquest." This means that religion is for the purpose of aiding man to act courageously in the direction of self-fulfillment and world socialization via the Pleroma. Under the heading "An Ethic of Conquest" Faricy says in this regard:

Teilhard points out that it is the function of religion to give a form to mankind's searching, to give a form to the free psychic energy of the world. In its present state of development mankind can accept religion of only one kind: a religion that takes the dynamic and future directed form of a movement of building toward some supreme unification of the world.¹

¹Robert Faricy, Teilhard de Chardin's Theology of the Christian in the World (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1967), p. 175.

Christianity is just such a religion since Teilhard sees the world in process of being created; man thus sharing in the creative process and also in the conquering forces that build the world toward ultimate wholeness.

Teilhard has developed a "work ethic" that is similar in many respects to the traditional Protestant position which elevates and dignifies human endeavor in so far as it is seen in unity with the positive work process of God's will. The world is the occasion for expressing one's responsibility by creating and advancing those situations and forces that make for unity and the building up of the world. One's task is not assumed under stark authority or obedience whether divine or human; rather man's endeavor is the personal contribution of his life to the ultimate course of social or world actualization and completion.

Human endeavor is more one's being in partnership with God, sharing in the process of world unification and by personal sanctification seeking for the world's reconciliation and peace. Morality, then, is no longer for the sole purpose of individual protection and salvation, but must extend to a social morality for the building up of mankind in general. Moral man must extend himself with an energy that will generate a moral society.

There are three principle Christian virtues which Teilhard emphasizes: (1) Purity, (2) Charity (love) and (3) Self-denial (detachment).

1. Purity

All three are virtues of unification. For instance purity is the bringing together of the many forces of the soul into a spiritual maturity or interior unity. It is for Teilhard the personalizing virtue. Purity is always purity of heart and in a passage from

The Divine Milieu he says:

Purity, in the wide sense of the word, is not merely abstaining from wrong (that is only a negative aspect of purity), nor even chastity (which is only a remarkable special instance of it). It is the rectitude and the impulse introduced into our lives by the love of God sought in and above everything.

He is spiritually impure who, lingering in pleasure or shut up in selfishness, introduces, within himself and around himself, a principle of slowing-down and division in the unification of the universe in God.

He is pure, on the other hand, who, in accord with his place in the world, seeks to give Christ's desire to consummate all things precedence over his own immediate and momentary advantage.

Still purer and more pure is he who, attracted by God, succeeds in giving that movement and impulse of Christ's an ever greater continuity, intensity and reality - whether his vocation calls him to move always in the material zones of the world (through more and more spiritually), or whether, as is more often the case, he has access to regions where the divine gradually replaces for him all other earthly nourishment.²

2. Love

Just as purity is the human value which unifies the person,

²Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 132.

charity or love is the value which unifies persons with one another. Love, as stated previously, is the basic energy of evolution. He offers a rather clear statement on the nature of love in the following:

Christian Charity, which is preached so fervently by the Gospels, is nothing else than the more or less conscious cohesion of souls engendered by their communal convergence in Christ Jesus. It is impossible to love Christ without loving others.³

Love exists at all levels of the world, in its most primitive form hardly distinguished from molecular forces, then toward reproductive drives, and on to ultimately adhere to the realm of the spiritual. Teilhard's treatment of love is more fully developed in the essay "The Spirit of the Earth" in which he says:

Love is the most universal, most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces. After centuries... Huge, ubiquitous and always unsubdued - this wild force seems to have defeated all hopes of understanding and governing it. It is therefore allowed to run everywhere beneath our civilization. We are conscious... Can we not say quite simply that in its essence it is the attraction exercised on each unit of consciousness by the center of the universe in course of taking shape? It calls us to the great union, the realization of which is the only process at present taking place in nature. By this hypothesis... The most telling and profound way of describing the evolution of the universe would undoubtedly be to trace the evolution of love.⁴

The cosmic force of love being ungoverned and uncontrolled will draw each unit of consciousness into the center of the universe

³Ibid., p. 144

⁴Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Human Energy (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1969), pp. 32-33.

which we know Teilhard envisions as the loving heart of the Omega-Christ. Love binds us to each other and to the universe as a whole.

This last stage of love, namely, human unity, or "the vast intoxication of brotherly friendship," is that state of social totalization. Christianity and the church is the phylum of love, the line along which the universe is progressing toward final social synthesis and unity.

True union is not in the direction of an outward function or coercion of man wherein he is "mechanized." Teilhard repeats an earlier statement which has been underscored time and time again that under purely enforced conditions the center of consciousness cannot achieve its natural growth rising out of the technical center of social organization.

Only union through love and in love (using the word 'love' in its widest and most real sense of 'mutual internal affinity'), because it brings individuals together, not superficially or tangentially but center to center, can physically possess the property of not merely differentiating but also personalizing the elements which comprise it. This amounts to saying that even under the irresistible compulsion of the pressures causing it to unite, Mankind will only find and shape itself if men can learn to love one another in the very act of drawing closer.⁵

The end result of such a Cosmic force as love is the synthesizing and completing of evolution in the shape and form of the Omega-Christ. Also to love Christ is to have this universal and

⁵Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 245.

dynamic force ever moving one toward God, other persons and all creation.

3. Detachment

The tension or spiritual ambiguity in Teilhard is seen in the plea for involvement in the process of world unification and at the same time a renunciation of the world. We must come to understand that for Teilhard these are not mutually exclusive virtues and spiritual qualities. What he wishes to emphasize by renunciation and detachment is the notion that of working and acting in a self-effactive, humble posture of grace. This is to say, "... he loves the causes he is working for more than himself and he looks for the success of life more than for egotistical satisfaction of his own personal success."⁶

Detachment is not withdrawal but action and conquest. It is the attachment to the world that redeems and leads toward its unity in the Omega-Christ after the example of Jesus who redeemed the world on the cross by taking the world into himself. The key notion for Teilhard here is that of transformation, the natural being brought to its center in the supernatural. In The Divine Milieu he speaks of Christian detachment in this way:

Anyone who devotes himself to human duty according to the Christian formula, though outwardly he may seem

⁶Faricy, p. 196.

to be immersed in the concerns of the earth, is in fact, down to the depths of his being, a man of great detachment.

Of its very nature work is a manifold instrument of detachment, provided a man gives himself to it faithfully and without rebellion. In the first place it implies effort and a victory over inertia. And then, however interesting and intellectual it may be (and the more intellectual it is, the truer this becomes), work is always accompanied by the painful pangs of birth... The Christian knows that his function is to divinise the world in Jesus Christ. In him, therefore, the natural process which drives human action from ideal to ideal and towards objects ever more internally coherent and comprehensive in their embrace, reaches - thanks to the support of Revelation - its fullest expansion. And in him, consequently, detachment through action should produce its maximum effectiveness.

And this is perfectly true. The Christian as we have described him in these pages, is at once the most attached and the most detached of men. Convinced in a way in which the "worldly" cannot be of the unfathomable importance and value concealed beneath the humblest worldly successes, the Christian is at the same time as convinced as the hermit of the worthlessness of any success which is envisaged only as a benefit to himself (or even a general one) without reference to God. It is God and God alone whom he pursues through the reality of created things.⁷

Detachment is one's self-denial under grace in remembrance of the Incarnation. Such leads one to lovingly support of the world even though it becomes painful at times for the purpose of raising it to God as the transformed Bride or Body of the Lord.

Typical of Teilhard's more mature thinking on the subject is his remark that Christian detachment "... instead of leaving behind,

⁷Ibid., pp. 200-201.

it leads on; instead of cutting off, it raises. It is no longer a break-away but a break through; no longer a withdrawal but an act of emerging."⁸

TECHNOLOGY

Any discussion of scientific or technological advance must be held within the framework of Teilhard's basic evolutionary and Christian presupposition. It is this:

But here and now one thing is certain... and must be the sine qua non of any valid discussion and effective action affecting the political, economic and moral ordering of the present world: this is that nothing, absolutely nothing - we may as well make up our minds to it - can arrest the progress of social Man towards even greater interdependence and cohesion.⁹

Such is the unshakable conviction in the irreversibility of social unity and totalizing. In fact he exaggerates the point by saying that it would be easier at this stage of human arising to prevent the earth from revolving than to prevent Mankind from becoming totalized.

The corollary to the above proposition, Teilhard goes on to say, is the growth of generalized technology. Regarding technology and the process of Mankind's unification, Teilhard makes a rather interesting statement: "... it is inevitable that the mechanical equipment of society will become all - pervading and enormous."¹⁰

⁸Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man, p. 96.

⁹Ibid., p. 237.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 238.

He then considers the advancement of science and technology as a consistent and to be expected adjunct to the growth of Mankind. Technology is not an enemy to progress and social unification. "What has really let loose the Machine in the world, and for good, is that it both facilitates and indefinitely multiplies our activities."¹¹ Notice the positive remark, "and for good" regarding technology.

The results of technology must be directed then to a specific end and that is "the heightening of vision." Teilhard means to imply here that the energy created by advanced scientific discovery must create a deepening of man's reflective powers. The application of research for well-being instead of more-being is its regressive side. Scientific research is for "the growth of an idea" and when approached in this way will continue to assist Mankind toward maturity.

For how can we fail to discern in the simultaneous rise of Society, the Machine, and Thought, this three-fold tide that is bearing us upwards, the essential and primordial process of Life itself - I mean, the organic infolding of Cosmic matter upon itself, whereby ever-increasing unity, subtended by ever-heightened consciousness, is achieved by even more complicated structural arrangements? We must not suppose, even at this early and half-passive stage of our hominisation, that the partly enforced flowering of thought imposed on us by planetary pressure represents a force of enslavement of which we are the victims: we must recognize it as a force of liberation.¹²

Teilhard makes it quite plain in a footnote to this statement that such a liberating process may well be accompanied by a certain amount of suffering, set-backs and even wastage. While the problem

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 240.

of Evil is not dealt with in this presentation, it will be noted that for Teilhard evil is "diminishment." There must be built into the process of evolution a degree of unavoidable evil; that is, the impossibility for a world in ever-increasing complexity to expect no threatening and testing of its strength. The factors of evil are integrated into God's plan who uses those forces of diminishment to serve the higher ends of unity and peace.

But God will make it good - he will take his revenge, if one may use the expression - by making evil itself serve a higher good of his faithful, the very evil which the present state of creation does not allow him to suppress immediately.¹³

Naturally, science cannot overextend its power by rash, careless, thoughtless action. "We must take care" Teilhard warns, "We still have feet of clay."¹⁴ Yet the unshakable confidence in the arising and convergent aspects of socialization leads Teilhard to say in light of any possible scientific set-back:

It is reasoned calculation, not speculation, which makes me ready to lay odds on the ultimate triumph of hominisation over all the vicissitudes threatening its progress. For a Christian... the eventual biological success of Man on Earth is not merely a probability but a certainty. Since Christ (and in Him virtually the World) is already risen.¹⁵

The opposite position to Teilhard's confidence in hominization via technology is that of Ellul's, who warns us against the myth of the technicians. As a machinoclast, he laments over the

¹³Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu, p. 86.

¹⁴Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man, p. 242.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 246.

false slogans:

The technicians intone, 'We strive for man's happiness; we seek to create a Man of excellence. We put forces of nature at his disposal in full confidence that he will overcome the problems of the present' and so on.¹⁶

The myth here is Man - not as an individual, as a person, but as an abstract entity; the technician being interested in results rather than moral ends.

The problem, as Ellul sees it, is one of technical convergence which concludes in operational totalitarianism, "... no longer is any part of man free and independent of these techniques."¹⁷ Convergence is viewed in the exact opposite to that of Teilhard who sees this phenomenon as securing freedom and personalization. The presence and force of Ellul is a reminder that not every witness to the value of technique and the machine shares Teilhard's hopeful and optimistic viewpoint. Certainly Teilhard would appreciate the caveat repeated by Ellul regarding the dangers of society's being assimilated and encircled by technique and the machine. This would indeed enslave and not do what Teilhard envisions for the maturing of the spiritual energy of Mankind. It goes without saying that in the case of Teilhard, the energy of love drawing Mankind to the center of Being is a guard against our becoming depersonalized by technique.

A recent work dealing with our technological society includes a reference to Teilhard as "... a member of that class of prophets

¹⁶Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 390.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 391.

who acknowledges the relevance of the new age."¹⁸ While much that is said is applicable to the thought of Teilhard, it is not altogether accurate to say that Teilhard does not refer his new creation as technological man. "He prefers to call him progressive man, 'the man to whom the terrestrial future means more than the mere present,' but technological man is who he really is."¹⁹ If this title of technological man is used in a pejorative sense, then it is inaccurate to lay this charge against Teilhard. The technological man is not for Teilhard separate and isolated from the spiritual values that energize the person through the love of the central presence of that "Someone," Omega-Christ.

Furthermore, it is a weak conclusion to describe Teilhard's thought as:

"... a world view that dissolves into a materialist mysticism in which the outlines of technological man becomes blurred by a kaleidoscope of strobe lights and votive candles combining to obscure rather than illumine."²⁰

Teilhard is quite insistent as this presentation has repeatedly stated, that the identity of the person is actualized by union and not dissipated or dissolved. Something that Teilhard stands firm for throughout his entire presentation is this:

Humanity is no longer imaginable without science. But no more is science possible without some religion to animate it. Christianity is an exemplary form of

¹⁸Victor Ferkiss, Technological Man: The Myth and The Reality (New York: New American Library, 1969), pp. 86-89.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 87.

²⁰Ibid., p. 89.

the religion of science. Must I add that it is the necessary form, since earth seems unable to follow the true progress of its activities to the end except by coming converted? To judge... It remains (and this is the least one can say) that the Christian scientist seems to everyone the best prepared to develop in himself and foster around him the new human type seemingly awaited at present for the further advancement of the earth: the seeker who devotes himself, ultimately through love, to the labours of discovery.²¹

For Teilhard, then, technology is energized and directed toward ends that are not obscure but are dictated to Mankind through a love that binds and unifies all life.

ESCHATOLOGY

Teilhard's doctrine of the incarnation and crucifixion do not isolate themselves from what he says about their implications for the future. The resurrection too has critical value for Teilhard because it allows Christ to occupy the apex or Omega position in relation to evolution. The advent and arising of Christ is the occasion to actualize cosmo-genesis; that is, to bring the global process to maturity in Christ. Christian doctrine can never be isolated from the future aspects of Christo-genesis whereby as Omega-Point he draws all life-force to himself.

The theological views of Teilhard are conditioned by his understanding and acceptance of evolution in such a fashion that his Christology is inseparable from the meaning of the history of man as

²¹Teilhard de Chardin, Human Energy, p. 180.

eschatology. As Crespy says:

In fact, the Christology of Teilhard is an eschatology. Or rather, the eschatology absorbs all the 'contents' of the Christology found elsewhere by making them converge within itself. Each time we become interested in one 'content' among others, he leads us to the parousia.²²

It may seem possible to criticize Teilhard on the basis of his eschatological elevation of the Christ figure to the practically unnoticed place given to the historical Jesus. Yet Teilhard is quite clear as to the fact that the total or universal Christ via the parousia has its roots deep in the actual historical and concrete identity of Jesus of Nazareth. He states:

The more, in fact, one considers the fundamental laws of evolution, the more one becomes convinced that the universal Christ would not be able to appear at the end of time, unless he has previously inserted himself into the course of the world's movement by way of birth in the form of an element. If it is really by Christ-Omega that the universe is held in movement, on the other hand, it is from his concrete source, the Man of Nazareth, that Christ-Omega (theoretically and historically) derives for our experience his whole stability.²³

In another passage Teilhard defends himself against the criticism as to a disparity between the eschatological Christ and the historical Jesus:

The mystical Christ, the universal Christ of St. Paul can only have value and meaning in our view

²² Georges Crespy, From Science to Theology (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 94.

²³ Wildiers, p. 137.

as an expansion of the Christ who was born of Mary and died on the cross. From the latter, the former essentially draws its basic quality of being incontestable and concrete. No matter to what extent one allows himself to be involved in the divine space open to the Christian mystic, one cannot completely leave the Jesus of the Gospels. On the contrary, one feels a growing need to envelop oneself ever more firmly in his human truth.²⁴

The incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection all have a connection with the parousia in so far as they allow for the presence of that element of psychic center for universal gathering to be actualized in the future.

It is necessary that the socialization and maturation of the world to be realized before Christ comes again. As Crespy notes:

For the Parousia is not the arbitrary, unmotivated intervention of God in the world, but the act by which God will bring about the sudden and instantaneous transformation of a world already matured and prepared by the presence and the growth in it of the animator Christ.²⁵

Utopianism, as far as Teilhard is concerned, is unthinkable because any "golden age" has attached to it an ideal of well-being rather than more-being. Granted, that while economic and other human conditions will be advanced to their most meaningful state, such are not ends in themselves but serve the purpose of "being." This means that "having" is dependent upon "being" for ultimate meaning.

²⁴Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu, p. 95.

²⁵Crespy, p. 95.

CHAPTER VII

CRITIQUE

1. The Two Omegas

Is the modern person equipped with the contemplative or meditative attitude necessary to "see" the spirit of the earth as Teilhard desires? Such a frame of mind would presuppose the undeniable force of spiritual values upon the modern person but such is not obviously the case. Has the attempt at reconciliation, then, between science and religion been effective by way of allowing either discipline to see the other as the necessary counterpart to itself? For all intents and purposes, the religions continue to function independently of science and likewise science for the most part feels no need to be informed by religion. There has not as yet appeared any serious harmonizing or uniting of the two as Teilhard had envisioned. Why?

The most immediate answer would be that Teilhard's "two Omegas" are not ipso facto identifiable. There seems to be no compelling reason to unite the impersonal Omega of convergent evolution with the personal Omega of the Risen Christ. Such a union grows out of a mystical or religious a priori which only then can justify the union of the two Omegas.

Like all keystones in any system of thought, the question must be raised as to whether or not it can bear the weight of not only consistency within the system itself but coherence with the

data of reality as well. It is true indeed that the identification of the two Omegas is the keystone, upon which all else depends, in Teilhard's presentation of reality and the consequent reconciliation between theology and science.

Religion need not adapt itself to the model of convergent evolution as the final and conclusive pronouncement of science upon the facts of existence. Teilhard locks up the future of scientific analysis by his Christification of matter which is in process of development upon a single principle. Likewise from the side of science, not only would it disclaim a necessary spiritual quality to the material aspects of the world but would not feel justified in attributing to Christ the status of Omega. Science would be prone toward a more open and inclusive acknowledgement of religious values and experience.

If the question were raised as to the force of appeal in Teilhard's thought, the answer would seem to hinge upon a prior acceptance of the Christian religion as the condition for absorbing his total reference to reality. One would be hard pressed on the basis of science to arrive at the unqualified and undisputed center of reality seen by Teilhard in the process of Christogenesis.

Teilhard is inconsistent at this point because, on the one hand he talks as if Omega-Christ were a matter of pure observation and condition of objective phenomena, while on the other hand he qualifies the matter by saying that such comes by revelation and grace. It cannot be both. The latter is more consistent with his

thought, but then the phenomenal and scientific aspects of the issue become lost or seriously blurred to say the least.

The two Omegas may have a common basis in that "Someone" whom we know to be the Christ but the reason for such identification comes more from the side of mystical religious experience than scientific analysis. For this reason, the two Omegas would appear to be more separate than Teilhard had hoped might be the case.

2. The Confusion of A Starting Point

There appears to be at least three major propositions or hypotheses from which Teilhard embarks on his quest for truth. Obviously there is the "phenomenal" by which we mean the world of matter, the geosphere, that realm of existence which lends itself to the scientific, especially geological investigation. Next, there is the starting point which Teilhard calls the biosphere; the realm of existence that includes the organic and all living species. Again, the scientific investigation continues to advance knowledge of reality in the fields of biology, mammal palaeontology and anthropology.

The threshold into the noosphere is crossed by conscious reflection and co-reflection. Existence extends beyond the physical to the psychic; that is, the conjunction of the elements of bios and noos allow for two new dimensions to reality and consequently potential starting points, namely the psychological and the spiritual. Included at this level also are the socio-political factors of existence.

The threshold into Christogenesis is crossed by the positing of the body of Christ into the world, thus creating via the Incarnation, that element of psychic and spiritual energy which will so Christify matter that an eventual unification and harmonization of future existence is anticipated. This is the zenith of the spiritual, coming to reside in Christianity of a Roman Catholic type.

Teilhard, it would appear, offers one the option of starting the quest for truth and consequent methodology at these several levels. For example, the level of the noosphere would suggest the quest for meaning to be a response to the existential estrangement and confusion of the person in the wake of meaninglessness. Such a starting point is not foreign to Teilhard's thought. For it has been shown repeatedly that his socio-political as well as his spiritual hopes are directed toward an "open" future in order to compensate for a "closed" view of the universe which is so frustrating to meaningful values. One could be justified, then, in claiming as a starting point the existential milieu of all existence.

However, the existential milieu must be viewed in larger terms, namely that of the divine milieu. The future is guaranteed by the major presupposition that the world is in process of planetization as a result of its being endowed with "spiritual presence." That is to say, the transcendent power and person of God which at the same time compliments the world, must be seen as a working hypothesis for Teilhard. Again, there is every justification for assuming that this is the sine qua non for all reality and truth.

There is yet the criterion of "the phenomenon of man"; that is, the "facts" of existence in so far as they are describable and thus open to the process of scientific analysis. So to the existential and divine milieu, there may be added the scientific milieu. This is the methodology that removes any ontological and metaphysical causality and contents itself to an investigation of the pragmatic data of existence. Hence, Teilhard's "phenomena and reality" is easily given over to the starting point of science.

The unresolved question is in the relationship between these three major propositions and the need for a development which could point to the primacy of one or the other. Just as in the confusion regarding the two Omegas and their meaning, so too a confusion arises over the consideration of a starting point. The thought of Teilhard would be more consistent and coherent by a clearer approach to this subject.

3. Totalization and Individuation

Mankind's coming together in consolidation and unity is the end result of Teilhard's thought based on the words of Jesus, "that they all may be one..." in John 17:21. However, the unresolved tension is found in the fact of the direction and goal of evolution as in-folding or convergent so as to accomplish the unification of the human mass within its global environment and at the same time, the consequent intensifying of the personal centeredness and identity of each individual within the planetized mass. To a degree union

distinguishes and fulfills the individual as Teilhard insists. But the model of organic wholeness presupposes something else besides coherence, and that is a hierarchy of function and importance.

This means that there will be distinct categories of leadership as over against classes of laborers and followers. Often the presupposition of the organic schema for unity is that of equality of significance, position, place and person. In fact, this is not the case in reality; for while there is something of a common sharing and participation in the life process, the overwhelming evidence speaks in favor of unique responsibility and separate location and usefulness.

It is interesting to note in this regard that the unification of the human mass is not at the final event of the parousia, a converging of "all" individuals. There must be acknowledged according to Teilhard and other apocalyptic positions a severe rift in the mass at that cataclysmic point. Such a separation seems to weaken the common assumption implicit in Teilhard, that of the increasing amorizing or loving capabilities of the masses as they adhere together in socialization and that a rift or split would be the prelude to just the opposite of the Omega-Point. Teilhard clearly states this separation by saying that men:

... will hasten to the place where they are irrevocably destined by the complete maturation of things and the inexorable irreversibility of the whole history of the world. Some of them appear as spiritualized matter in limitless fulfillment

of an eternal communion; others appear as materialized spirit in the conscious pangs and agonies of an interminable decomposition.¹

Again Teilhard's Christian doctrine of the parousia takes precedence over convergent evolution as the means for final union of the masses, which in turn, seems to seriously limit the process toward which history is assumedly moving. For Teilhard the phenomena of reality cannot complete itself in the ultimate unity of the masses apart from the required parousia of Christ. This latter event implies an acknowledgement of individuals so different in history that they must be split off from the body of the "eternal communion." This weakens both the divine and human efforts in the direction of totalization. If the unity of mankind can only be achieved at the loss of so much individuality, it is too gratuitous a unity. Such seems to be the paradox between totalization and the individual.

Teilhardian thought could be improved somewhat by considering the suggestion of more recent progressive theology when, for example, John Cobb suggests that God moves men toward himself and each other by persuasion as a Father and not by force as a Master. This would allow for an improved model when dealing with unity and individual responsibility.

¹Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 322.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

COMMENTS ON VOCABULARY

The following are the more basic terms in Teilhard's thought and will help provide us with some definition of his important notions:

Phenomenon: As the etymology suggests: that which appears, that is to say, that part of itself which being makes manifest either to our senses or to our introspective consciousness. Physical, biological, psychological and social facts are all phenomena in as much as they can be described. When Teilhard looks at man and even at the Christian "fact" as phenomena, he is leaving aside for the time being the question of their underlying causes, or when appropriate, their supernatural causes. He is confining himself to observing them simply as they present themselves to him. Thus we shall find him speaking of the human phenomenon, the spiritual, social, Christian, phenomenon.

Phenomenology: The method that seeks to bring out the meaning or reason (logos) of phenomena, by describing them as accurately and completely as possible. In the Preface to The Phenomenon of Man, Teilhard tells us what he has tried to do: "I have tried to establish a coherent order between antecedents and consequents. I have tried... to discover... an experimental law of recurrence which would express their successive appearance in time." Again, in the Foreword, he sums up his work as: "... an attempt to see and make others see what

happens to man, and what conclusions are forced upon us, when he is placed fairly and squarely within the framework of phenomenon and appearance." Teilhard's originality lies in having sought to describe the whole phenomenon, excluding no part of it.

Metaphysics: This word has a great many meanings in philosophy. Normally it means "the science of being as such and of its ultimate causes," or a method of arriving at it. Sometimes Teilhard gives it a more restricted meaning when he sees in metaphysics only a method of "reconstructing deductively, that is to say, a priori, the system observed (by phenomenological inquiry), starting from certain general principles that are accepted as absolute."

Dialectic: A reflective method, a dialogue or discussion between thought and itself (often assisted by dialogue with others), a process in which thought connects its operations and views, and links together its judgments. Teilhard sometimes uses it in its current sense of "the art of rigorously constructing chains of reasoning directed towards an end." More exactly, he uses the term "dialectic" to designate a stage in the whole process of his thought: apologetics. This "dialectic of the spirit" is a reflection that advances by alternating upon the postulates of action, that is, "energetics."

Apologetics: Originally, that branch of theology whose purpose is to defend the Christian religion against attack. It now, as it did for Teilhard, involves a dialectical approach that seeks to demonstrate the probability and reasonableness of Christian faith. It is thus

the rational instrument used by the Christian who is concerned with apostolic work.

Emergence: The appearance, in the course of evolution, of new and unpredictable properties. From the point of view of phenomenology, it is a threshold; from that of metaphysics, a creation. Underlying emergence is the Teilhardian notion of "Creative Transformation."

Transcendence: A type of relationship in which one term constitutes the other, without being limited by it. The soul transcends the body; God transcends the World.

Atomism: A general tendency, found in the Universe, towards granulation: in other words, to appear, when analyzed, as a multitude of "grains." Thus there is a multitude of atoms, of molecules, of grains of sand, of plants, of animals and even of thoughts ("atomism of the spirit").

Monad: Human individuality, in so far as it is an element of a whole and can reflect the whole.

Biosphere (from Bios, life): The word was first used by the Austrian geologist Eduard Suess (1831 - 1914). Teilhard uses it to mean "the layer of vitalized (living) substance that envelopes the earth."

Noosphere (from Noos, mind): "The terrestrial sphere of thinking substance." It is the thinking envelope woven around the earth, above the biosphere, and made up by the totality of mankind. Its

reality is already existing, and its density is constantly increasing through the rise in the human population, its interrelations and its spiritual quality.

Cosmogenesis: The global phenomenon of the evolution of the Universe. More particularly, it is a concept that emphasizes the fact that the Universe is, and has been, in continual process of formation since the beginning of time: in this, it is opposed to the ancient and medieval concept of a static cosmos. The whole of this general movement may be seen by man, more and more fundamentally, as:

Biogenesis (the genesis of life)
 Anthropogenesis (the genesis of the human species)
 Noogenesis (genesis of spirit)
 Christogenesis (genesis of the total Christ, of the Pleroma)

This same evolutionary process may be broken up, within the passage of time, into a number of major stages.

Moleculization: The transition from atoms to large molecules that will make possible the appearance of life. (The chief phenomenon of Biogenesis.)

Cephalization: The evolutionary tendency of the nervous system and sense-organs to concentrate in the head: that is particularly marked in the evolution of the vertebrates.

Cerebration: In the course of time, the brain of the highest order of the mammals, the primates, becomes even more elaborated and convoluted. (The chief phenomenon of anthropogenesis.)

Hominization: The critical point through which the evolution of cerebralization passes, associated with upright posture, to attain thinking man. (The chief phenomenon of noogenesis.)

Planetization: The phenomenon in which the ever-increasing mass of mankind, contained on an inelastic planet, converges upon itself. (One of the aspects of Christogenesis.)

Recurrence: A repetition that seems to reproduce an already manifested plan, and which combines a certain periodicity with, at the same time, something new.

Law of Recurrence: The law by which, at each successive stage of evolution, a new plurality - atomism, in fact - is formed, which allows a higher synthesis.

Phylum: A fascicle, within the evolutionary process, made up of a very large quantity of morphological units, each one of which represents a line of descent.

A further physical notion, that of "entropy," has great importance as a negative influence on the process of cosmogenesis:

Entropy: The quantity by which dissipation of energy may be measured. Teilhard uses it primarily in the sense of the general law of increasing entropy; in accordance with this law, energy is continually dissipated with the passage of time, ultimately reducing the Universe to a mean state of diffuse agitation, in which all exchange

of useful energy ceases. "Everything around us seems to be descending towards this death of matter; everything except life."

Parousia: The manifestation of the presence of Christ in all things. It will mark the end of all time.

Pantheism: The theory that ALL, or the Whole, and God are identical.

Pleroma: The whole of creation in its union with Christ.

APPENDIX B

TEILHARD'S PRAYERS AND SELF-EVALUATION

By way of epilogue, that is, a concluding autobiographic post-script to Teilhard, these prayers and introspective thoughts have been selected which represent the early (1918), the middle (1934) and late (1955) stages of his development. One is impressed with the consistency of vision and principle, with the balance of those influences "within" and "without" and by the zenith of his odyssey in the whole Universe-in-evolution. Consider the following prayers:

You have shown me the essential task of self-fulfillment in the plenitude of your incarnate Word, to which the world, through a chosen part of its whole being, is summoned...

The Universality of your divine attraction, and the intrinsic value of our human activity - I am on fire, Lord, to make known to all this twofold truth you have revealed to me, and to make it real...

And I, Lord, for my (very lowly) part, would wish to be the apostle - and, if I dare be so bold - the evangelist - of your Christ in the Universe.

Through my thinking, through the message I bring, through the practical activity of my whole life, I would wish to disclose and make known to men the bonds of continuity that make the Cosmos of our restless ferment into an ambience that is divinized by the Incarnation, that divinizes by communion, and that is divinizable by our co-operation.

To bring Christ, by virtue of a specifically organic connection, to the heart of realities that are esteemed to be the most dangerous, the most unspiritual, the most pagan - in that you have my gospel and my mission.

If men could only see that in each one of them there is an element of the Pleroma, would not that, Lord, effect the reconciliation between God and our age? If only they could understand that, with all its natural richness and its massive reality, the universe can find fulfillment only in Christ; and that Christ, in turn, can be attained only through a universe that has been carried to the very limit of its capabilities.

To those who are seduced by the treasure-house of the Real and overcome by its immediacy - to these I would show the life of the Lord Jesus flowing through all things - the true soul of the world.

To those who are dazzled by the nobility of human endeavor, I would say, in the name of Christ, that man's work is sacred; sacred both in the submission of the will to God, and in the great task it accomplishes in the course of endless tentative efforts - and that task is the liberation, natural and supernatural, of Spirit.

To those who are indolent, unenterprising, infantile, or narrowminded in their religious attitude, I would point out that man's development is essential to Christ for the formation of his Body, and that a constant spirit of inquiry directed towards the world and truth is an absolute duty...

Lord, to see drawn from so much wealth, lying idle or put to

base uses, all the dynamism that is locked up within it: this is my dream. And to share in bringing this about: this is the work to which I would dedicate myself.

As far as my strength will allow me, because I am a priest, I would henceforth be the first to become aware of what the world loves, pursues, suffers. I would be the first to seek, to sympathize, to toil: the first in self-fulfilment, the first in self-denial - I would be more widely human in my sympathies and more nobly terrestrial in my ambitions than any of the world's servants.

On the one hand I want to plunge into the midst of created things and, mingling with them, seize hold upon and disengage from them all that they contain of life eternal, down to the very last fragment, so that nothing may be lost; and on the other hand I want, by practising the counsels of perfection, to salvage through self-denial all the heavenly fire imprisoned within the threefold concupiscence of the flesh, of avarice, of pride: in other words, to hallow, through chastity, poverty, and obedience, the power enclosed in love, in gold, in independence.

That is why I have taken on my vows and my priesthood (and it is this that gives me my strength and my happiness), in a determination to accept and divinize the powers of the earth.

(From The Priest)

The originality of my belief lies in its being rooted in two domains of life which are commonly regarded as antagonistic. By

upbringing and intellectual training, I belong to the 'children of heaven'; but by temperament, and by my professional studies, I am a 'child of the earth.' Situated thus by life at the heart of two worlds with whose theory, idiom and feelings intimate experience has made me familiar, I have not erected my watertight bulkhead inside myself. On the contrary, I have allowed two apparently conflicting influences full freedom to react upon one another deep within me. And now, at the end of that operation, after thirty years devoted to the pursuit of interior unity, I have the feeling that a synthesis has been effected naturally between the two currents that claim my allegiance. The one has not destroyed, but has reinforced, the other. Today I believe probably more profoundly than ever in God, and certainly more than ever in the world. On an individual scale, may we not see in this the particular solution, at least in outline, of the great spiritual problem which the vanguard of mankind, as it advances, is now coming up against?...

For my own part, I set out resolutely in the only direction in which it seemed to me possible to carry my faith further, and so retain it. I tried to place at the head of the universe which I adored from birth, the risen Christ whom others had taught me to know. And the result of that attempt has been that I have never for the last twenty-five years ceased to marvel at the infinite possibilities which the 'universalization' of Christ opens up for religious thought...

In truth, the more I have thought about the magnificent

cosmic attributes lavished by St. Paul on the risen Christ, and the more I have considered the masterful significance of the Christian virtues, the more clearly have I realized that Christianity takes on its full value only when extended (as I find it rewarding to do) to cosmic dimensions. Inexhaustibly fructified by one another, my individual faith in the world and my Christian faith in Christ have never ceased to develop and grow more profound. By this sign, which argues a continual agreement between what is most determinedly emergent in me and what is most alive in the Christian religion, I have finally and permanently recognized that in the latter I have found the complement I sought to my own self, and to that I have surrendered.

But, if I have thus surrendered myself, why should not others, all others, also do the same?...

The passion for the world from which my faith springs; the dissatisfaction, too, which I experience at first when I am confronted by any of the ancient forms of religion - are not both these traces in my heart of the uneasiness, and expectancy which characterize the religious state of the world today?...

In that case, surely the solution for which modern mankind is seeking must essentially be exactly the solution which I have come upon. I believe that this is so, and it is in this vision that my hopes are fulfilled. A general convergence of religions upon a universal Christ who fundamentally satisfies them all: that seems to be the only possible conversion of the world, and the only form in which a religion of the future can be conceived.

(From How I Believe)

Energy Becoming Transformed into Prescence

And in consequence the possibility can be seen, opening up for man, of not only believing and hoping but (something much more unexpected and valuable) of loving, co-extensively and co-organically with the whole past, the present and the future of a Universe that is in process of concentrating upon itself...

It would seem that a single ray of such light falling like a spark, no matter where, on the noosphere, would be bound to produce an explosion of such violence that it would almost instantaneously set the face of the earth ablaze and make it entirely new.

How is it, then, that as I look around me, still dazzled by what I have seen, I find that I am almost the only person of my kind, the only one to have seen? And so, I cannot, when asked, quote a single writer, a single work, that gives a clearly expressed description of the wonderful 'Diaphany' that has transfigured everything for me?

How, most of all, can it be that 'when I come down from the mountain' and in spite of the glorious vision I still retain, I find that I am so little a better man, so little at peace, so incapable of expressing in my actions, and thus adequately communicating to others, the wonderful unity that I feel encompassing me?

Is there in fact a Universal Christ, is there a divine milieu?
Or am I, after all, simply the dupe of a mirage in my own mind?

I often ask myself that question.

Everytime, however, that I begin to doubt, three successive waves of evidence rise up from deep within me to counter that doubt, sweeping away from my mind the mistaken fear that my 'Christic' may be no more than an illusion.

First there is the evidence provided by the coherence that this ineffable Element (or Milieu) introduces into the underlying depths of my mind and heart. As, of course, I know only too well, in spite of the ambitious grandeur of my ideas, I am still, in practice imperfect to a disturbing degree. For all the claims implicit in its expression, my faith does not produce in me as much real charity, as much calm trust, as the catechism still taught to children produces in the humble worshipper kneeling beside me. Nevertheless I know too that this sophisticated faith, of which I make such poor use, is the only faith I can tolerate, the only faith that can satisfy me - and even (of this I am certain) the only one that can meet the needs of the simple souls, the good folk, of tomorrow.

Next there is the evidence provided by the contagious power of a form of charity in which it becomes possible to love God 'not only with all one's body and all one's soul' but with the whole Universe-in-evolution. It would be impossible for me, as I admitted earlier, to quote a single 'authority' (religious or lay) of whom I could claim that in it I can full recognize myself, whether in relation to my 'cosmic' or my 'Christic' vision. On the other hand, I cannot fail to feel around me - if only from the way in which 'my ideas' are becoming more widely accepted - the pulsation of countless

people who are all - ranging from the borderline of unbelief to the depths of the cloister - thinking and feeling, or at least beginning vaguely to feel, just as I do. It is indeed heartening to know that I am not a lone discoverer but that I am, quite simply, responding to the vibration that (given a particular condition of Christianity and of the world) is necessarily active in all the souls around me. It is, in consequence, exhilarating to feel that I am not just myself or all alone, that my name is legion, that I am 'all men' and that this is true even in as much as the single-mindedness of tomorrow can be recognized as throbbing into life in the depths of my being.

Finally, there is the evidence contained in the superiority of my vision compared with what I had been taught - even though there is at the same time an identity with it. Because of their very function, neither the God who draws us to himself, nor the world whose evolution we share, can be a less powerful stimulant than we conceive and need. In either case - unless we are going to accept a positive discord in the very stuff of things - it is in the direction of the fullest that truth lies. Now, as we saw earlier, it is in the 'Christic' that, in the century in which we live, the Divine reaches the summit of adorability, and the evolutionary the extreme limit of activation. This can mean only one thing, that it is in that direction that the human must inevitably incline, there, sooner or later, to find unity.

Once that is realized, I immediately find a perfectly natural explanation for my isolation and apparent idiosyncrasy.

Everywhere on earth, at this moment, in the new spiritual atmosphere created by the idea of evolution, there float, in a state of extreme mutual sensitivity, love of God and faith in the world: the two essential components of the Ultra-human. These two components are everywhere 'in the air'; generally, however, they are not strong enough, both at the same time, to combine with one another in one and the same subject. In men, it happens by chance (temperament, upbringing, background) that the proportion of one to the other is correct, and the fusion of the two has been effected spontaneously - not as yet with sufficient force to spread explosively - but strong enough nevertheless to make it clear that the process is possible - and that sooner or later there will be a chain-reaction.

This is one more proof that the Truth has to appear only once, in one single mind, for it to be impossible for anything ever to prevent it from spreading universally and setting everything ablaze.

(From Le Christique)

Because, Lord, by every innate impulse and through all the hazards of my life I have been driven ceaselessly to search for you and to set you in the heart of the universe of matter, I shall have the joy, when death comes, of closing my eyes amidst the splendour of a universal transparency aglow with fire...

It is as if the fact of bringing together and connecting the two poles, tangible and intangible, external and internal, of the world which bears us onward had caused everything to burst into flames and set everything free.

In the guise of a tiny baby in its mother's arms, obeying the great laws of birth and infancy, you came, Lord Jesus, to swell in my infant soul; and then, as you re-enacted in me - and in so doing extended the range of - your growth through the Church, that same humanity which once was born and dwelt in Palestine began now to spread out gradually everywhere like an iridescence of unnumbered hues through which, without destroying anything, your presence penetrated - and endued with supervitality - every other presence about me.

And all this took place because, in a universe which was disclosing itself to me as structurally convergent you, by right of your resurrection, had assumed the dominating position of all-inclusive Centre in which everything is gathered together.

As mankind emerges into consciousness of the movement that carries it along, it has a continually more urgent need of a Direction and a Solution ahead and above, to which it will at last be able to consecrate itself.

Who, then, is this God, no longer simply the God of the old Cosmos but the God of the new Cosmogenesis - so constituted precisely because the effect of a mystical operation that has been going on for two thousand years has been to disclose in you, beneath the Child of Bethelhem and the Crucified, the moving Principle and the all-embracing Nucleus of the World itself? Who is this God for whom our generation looks so eagerly? Who but you, Jesus, who represent him and bring him to us?

Lord of consistence and union, you whose distinguishing mark and essence is the power indefinitely to grow greater, without distortion or loss of continuity, to the measure of the mysterious Matter whose Heart you fill and all whose movements you ultimately control - Lord of my childhood and Lord of my last days - God, complete in relation to yourself and yet, for us, continually being born - God, who, because you offer yourself to our worship as 'evolver' and 'evolving,' are henceforth the only being that can satisfy us - sweep away at last the clouds that still hide you - the clouds of hostile prejudice and those, too, of false creeds.

Let your universal Presence, spring forth in a blaze that is at once Diaphany and Fire. O ever-greater Christ!

(Prayer to the Ever-greater
Christ)

APPENDIX C

BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The facts of Pierre Teilhard's life help to illuminate the development of his thought. However, before the writer continues, an indebtedness for much of the following material is hereby given to Julian Huxley.¹ Teilhard's father was a small landowner in Auvergne, a gentleman farmer who was also an archivist, with a taste for natural history. Pierre was born in 1881, the fourth in a family of eleven. At the age of ten he went as a boarder to a Jesuit College where, besides doing well in all prescribed subjects of study, he became devoted to field geology and mineralogy. When eighteen years old, he decided to become a Jesuit, and entered their order. At the age of twenty-four, after an interlude in Jersey mainly studying philosophy, he was sent to teach physics and chemistry in a Jesuit College at Cairo. In the course of his three years in Egypt, and a further four studying theology in Sussex, he acquired real competence in geology and palaeontology; and before being ordained priest in 1912, a reading Bergson's Evolution Créatrice had helped to inspire in him a profound interest in the general facts and theories of evolution.

Returning to Paris, he pursued his geological studies and started working under Marcellin Boule, the leading prehistorian and archaeologist of France, in his Institute of Human Palaeontology at

¹Julian Huxley, "Introduction" in Teilhard de Chardin's The Phenomenon of Man (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), pp. 21-28.

the Museum of Natural History. It was here that he met his lifelong friend and colleague in the study of prehistory, the Abbe Breuil, and it was here that his interests were first directed to the subject on which his life's work was centred - the evolution of man. In 1913 he visited the site where the famous Piltdown skull had recently been unearthed, in company with its discoverer Dr. Dawson and the leading English palaeontologist Sir Arthur Smith Woodward. This was his first introduction to the excitements of palaeontological discovery and scientific controversy.

During the first World War he served as a stretcher-bearer, receiving the Military Medal and the Legion of Honour, and learned a great deal about his fellow men and about his own nature. The war strengthened his sense of religious vocation, and in 1918 he made a triple vow of poverty, chastity and obedience.

By 1919 the major goals of his life were clearly indicated. Professionally, he had decided to embark on a geological career, with special emphasis on palaeontology. As a thinker, he had reached a point where the entire phenomenal universe, including man, was revealed as a process of evolution, and he found himself impelled to build up a generalised theory or philosophy of evolutionary process which would take account of human history and human personality as well as of biology, and from which one could draw conclusions as to the future evolution of man on earth. And as a dedicated Christian priest, he felt it imperative to try to reconcile Christian theology with this evolutionary philosophy, to relate the facts of religious

experience to those of natural science.

Returning to the Sorbonne, he took his Doctorate in 1922. He had already become Professor of Geology at the Catholic Institute of Paris, where his lectures attracted great attention among the students. In 1923, however, he went to China for a year on behalf of the Museum, on a palaeontological mission directed by another Jesuit, Père Licent. His Lettres de Voyage reveal the impression made on him by the voyage through the tropics, and by his first experience of geological research in the desert remoteness of Mongolia and north-western China. This expedition inspired La Messe sur le Monde, a remarkable and truly poetical essay which was at one and the same time mystical and realistic, religious and philosophical.

A shock awaited him after his return to France. Some of the ideas which he had expressed in his lectures about original sin and its relation to evolution, were regarded as unorthodox by his religious superiors, and he was forbidden to continue teaching. In 1926 he returned to work with Père Licent in China, where he was destined to stay, with brief returns to France and excursions to the United States, to Abyssinia, India, Burma and Java, for twenty years. Here, as scientific adviser to the Geological Survey of China, centred first at Tientsin and later at Peking, he met and worked with outstanding palaeontologists of many nations, and took part in a number of expeditions, including the Citroen Croisiere Jaune under Haardt, and Davidson Black's expedition which unearthed the skull of Peking man.

In 1938 he was appointed Director of the Laboratory of Advanced Studies in Geology and Palaeontology in Paris, but the outbreak of war prevented his return to France. His enforced isolation in China during the six war years, painful and depressing though it often was, undoubtedly helped his inner spiritual development. It encouraged ample reading and reflection, and stimulated the full elaboration of his thought.

It was a nice stroke of irony that the action of Père Teilhard's religious superiors in barring him from teaching in France because of his ideas on human evolution, should have led him to China and brought him into intimate association with one of the most important discoveries in that field, and drove him to enlarge and consolidate his "dangerous thoughts."

During the whole of this period he was writing essays and books on various aspects and implications of evolution, culminating in 1938 in the manuscript of Le Phenomene Humain. But he never succeeded in obtaining permission to publish any of his controversial or major works. This caused him much distress, for he was conscious of a prophetic mission: but he faithfully observed his vow of obedience. Professionally, too, he was extremely active throughout this period. He contributed a great deal to our knowledge of palaeolithic cultures in China and neighbouring areas, and to the general understanding of the geology of the Far East. This pre-occupation with large-scale geology led him to take an interest in the geological development of the world's continents: each continent,

he considered, had made its own special contribution to biological evolution. He also did important palaeontological work on the evolution of various mammalian groups.

The wide range of his vision made him impatient of over-specialization, and of the timidity which refuses to pass from detailed study to broad synthesis. With his conception of mankind as at the same time an unfinished product of past evolution and an agency of distinctive evolution to come, he was particularly impatient of what he felt as the narrowness of those anthropologists who limited themselves to a study of physical structure and the details of primitive social life. He wanted to deal with the entire human phenomenon, as a transcendence of biological by psycho-social evolution. And he had considerable success in redirecting along these lines the institutions with which he was connected.

Back in France in 1946, Père Teilhard plunged eagerly into European intellectual life, but in 1947 he had a serious heart attack, and was compelled to spend several months convalescing in the country. On his return to Paris, he was enjoined by his superiors not to write any more on philosophical subjects: and in 1948 he was forbidden to put forward his candidature for a Professorship in the College de France in succession to the Abbe Breuil, though it was known that this, the highest academic position to which he could aspire, was open to him. But perhaps the heaviest blow awaited him in 1950, when his application for permission to publish Le Groupe Zoologique Humain (a recasting of Le Phenomene Humain) was refused

in Rome. By way of compensation he was awarded the signal honour of being elected Membre de l'Institut, as well as having previously become a corresponding Member of the Academie des Sciences, an officer of the Legion d'Honneur, and a director of research in the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

Already in 1948 he had been invited to visit the United States of America, where he made his first contacts with the Wenner-Gren Foundation (or Viking Foundation as it was then called), in whose friendly shelter he spent the last four years of his life. The Wenner-Gren Foundation also sponsored his two visits to South Africa, where he was able to study at first hand the remarkable discoveries of Broom and Dart concerning Australopithecus, that near-ancestor of man, and to lay down a plan for the future co-ordination of palaeontological and archaeological work in this area, so important as a centre of hominid evolution.

His position in France became increasingly difficult, and in 1951 he moved his headquarters to New York. Here, at the Wenner-Gren Foundation, he played an important role in framing anthropological policy, and made valuable contributions to the international symposia which it organised.

Throughout this period, he had been actively developing his ideas, and had written his spiritual autobiography, Le Coeur de la Matiere, the semi-technical Le Groupe Zoologique Humain, and various technical and general articles later included in the collections entitled La Vision du Passe and L'Apparition de l'Homme.

In the summer of 1954, Teilhard made his last trip to France. These were very demanding months and upon his return, the now septuagenarian, Teilhard shows signs of physical fatigue and exhaustion. He became engrossed in the thought of death and on one occasion remarked, "I am going to Him who is coming."

We know of the chief place occupied by the Resurrection in the thought of Teilhard. He told friends that he hoped when it was time for him to die it would be on Easter Sunday. Unusual as it might appear and in keeping with the mystic sense that pervaded his life, Teilhard died of a heart attack Easter Sunday, April 10, 1955, as if to participate in the glory of the Resurrection of the Lord whom he loved and served so faithfully.

He was prevailed on to leave his manuscripts to a friend. They therefore could be published after his death, since permission to publish is only required for the work of a living writer. The prospect of eventual publication must have been a great solace to him, for he certainly regarded his general and philosophical writings as the keystone to his life's work, and felt it his supreme duty to proclaim the fruits of his labour.

His influence on the world's thinking is bound to be important. Through his combination of wide scientific knowledge with deep religious feeling and a rigorous sense of values, he has forced theologians to view their ideas in the new perspective of evolution, and scientists to see the spiritual implications of their knowledge. He has both clarified and unified our vision of reality. In the

light of that new comprehension, it is no longer possible to maintain that science and religion must operate in thought-tight compartments or concern separate sectors of life; they are both relevant to the whole of human existence. The religiously-minded can no longer turn their backs upon the natural world, or seek escape from its imperfections in a supernatural world; nor can the materialistically-minded deny importance to spiritual experience and religious feeling.

Like him, we must face the phenomena. If we face them resolutely, and avail ourselves of the help which his intellectual and spiritual travail has provided, we shall find a more assured basis for our thought and a more certain direction for our evolutionary advance. But, like him, we must not take refuge in abstractions or generalities. He always took account of the specific realities of man's present situation, though set against the more general realities of long-term evolution; and he always endeavoured to think concretely, in terms of actual patterns of organisation - their development, their mode of operation and their effects.

As a result, he has helped us to define more adequately both our own nature, the general evolutionary process, and our place and role in it. Thus clarified, the evolution of life becomes a comprehensible phenomenon. It is an antientropic process, running counter to the second law of thermodynamics with its degradation of energy and its tendency to uniformity. With the aid of the sun's energy, biological evolution marches uphill, producing increased variety and higher degrees of organisation.

Père Teilhard enables us to see which possibilities are in the long run desirable. What is more, he has helped to define the conditions of advance, the conditions which will permit an increase of fulfilment and prevent an increase of frustration. The conditions of advance are these: global unity of mankind's noetic organisation or system of awareness, but a high degree of variety within that unity; love, with goodwill and full co-operation; personal integration and internal harmony; and increasing knowledge.

Knowledge is basic. It is knowledge which enables us to understand the world and ourselves, and to exercise some control or guidance. It sets us in a fruitful and significant relation with the enduring processes of the universe. And, by revealing the possibilities of fulfilment that are still open, it provides an over-riding incentive.

We, mankind, contain the possibilities of the earth's immense future, and can realise more and more of them on condition that we increase our knowledge and our love.

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